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ROME AND NEAR EASTERN KINGDOMS AND PRINCIPALITIES, 44-31 BC
A study of political relations during civil war

Hendrikus Antonius Margaretha
VAN WIJLICK

Abstract

This thesis presents a critical analysis of the political relations between Rome on the one hand and Near Eastern kingdoms and principalities on the other hand during the age of civil war from 44 until 31 BC. In contrast to previous studies of Rome's foreign affairs in the eastern Mediterranean glancing over this era as a result of their focus on longer periods of time during the Republic or Principate, this work yields a unique insight into the workings of Rome's interstate dealings during a time of internal upheaval.

By looking at each bilateral relationship separately both from the perspective of Rome and the kingdom or principality, it shows first and foremost the wide variety in political dealings between representatives of Roman power and Near Eastern rulers. Yet, in spite of this diversity, issues such as the political dependency of Near Eastern kings and other dynasts on Rome show that there are also some common characteristics about the relations. Ever since Pompey reorganised the eastern Mediterranean, Rome interfered on a regular basis in the internal administration and the foreign affairs of the kingdoms and principalities in the Near East. A notable exception in this case formed Parthia, the only realm that could measure up to Rome.

The thesis also investigates to what extent the conduct of Rome and Near Eastern kingdoms and principalities towards one another in the period from 44 until 31 was typical for this period. Drawing upon examples from earlier eras, it shows that to a large degree the behaviour of Rome and Near Eastern realms in our age of civil war was not typical and manifests continuity with earlier periods. It thus presents a *prima facie* case for the re-examination of prevailing views on the specificities of Rome and the civil war in relation to international relations of the period.

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**Hendrikus Antonius Margaretha
VAN WIJLICK**

**A thesis submitted to the Department of Classics and Ancient History at
Durham University
For the qualification of
Doctor of Philosophy**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

References to classical authors are made according to the system of *OCD*. Abbreviations of journals follow the system of *l'Année philologique*. All other abbreviations used are listed below:

<i>AE</i>	<i>L'Année épigraphique</i> .
<i>BNJ</i>	<i>Brill's New Jacoby</i> . URL : http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/browse/brill-s-new-jacoby
<i>Grueber, CRRBM</i>	H.A. Grueber, <i>Coins of the Roman Republic in the British Museum I-III</i> (London 1910).
<i>I. Mylasa</i>	W. Blümel, <i>Die Inschriften von Mylasa I-II</i> (Bonn 1987-1988).
<i>LSJ</i>	H.G. Liddell, R. Scott, H.S. Jones, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> (9 th ed. Oxford 1940).
<i>Newell, SMA</i>	E.T. Newell, <i>The Seleucid Mint of Antioch</i> (New York [NY] 1918).
<i>OCD</i>	S. Hornblower, A. Spawforth, <i>The Oxford Classical Dictionary</i> (3 rd ed. Oxford 2003).
<i>OGIS</i>	W. Dittenberger, <i>Orientis graeci inscriptiones selectae I-II</i> (Leipzig 1903-1905).
<i>Sherk, RDGE</i>	R.K. Sherk, <i>Roman Documents from the Greek East. Senatus consulta and epistulae to the Age of Augustus</i> (Baltimore [MD] 1969).

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In caram matris meae memoriam

INTRODUCTION

Twenty years have passed since the publication of *The Roman Near East 31 BC – AD 337*, Fergus Millar's ground-breaking work on the social and political history of the Levant and its hinterland during the Principate and the successive period of the tetrarchs up until the death of Constantine.¹ As prophesied by Michał Gawlikowski in a review at that time,² the book still stands as the best analysis of Near Eastern society during the Roman imperial era, not only in that it exposes the variety in civilisation and culture across the entire region in question, but also in that it demonstrates how changes in political circumstances – more specifically Rome's eastward expansion and the interplay with the Parthians and (later) the Sassanians – influenced social life within the area. Pioneering as this monograph thus is, Millar deliberately chose to begin his study at the Battle of Actium, thereby leaving out the period of civil war that began in 44 following Caesar's assassination and ended with Octavian's victory in 31 and formed a transitory period from Republic to Principate.³ The aim of this thesis is to redress this imbalance by providing a critical analysis of the political relations maintained by Rome on the one hand and Near Eastern kingdoms and principalities on the other hand during the era of civil conflict from 44 until 31. This period was characterised by institutional novelties, deviant administrative practices – especially with regard to the provinces – and by an almost continuous movement of armies and military personnel.⁴ It is in the light of these developments vital to examine whether the

¹ Millar (1993).

² Gawlikowski (1994) 244.

³ Millar (1993) xii. The difficulties are further explained in Millar (1987) = (2006) 3-31.

⁴ For a critical analysis of the commanders under which Roman legions served, as well as the location of these troops in the period from 44 until 31, see Brunt (1971) 480-508. For a brief summary of the changes with regard to the administration of Rome's provinces, see Millar (1973) 50-61 = (2002) 242-259; Bleicken (1990).

relations between Rome and royal powers in the Near East – the area that more than once would function as the main stage of the civil war – also underwent any changes. No publication has specifically focused on Rome’s interstate transactions with the Near East during the thirteen years that marked the transition from Republic to Principate. Although the French historian Maurice Sartre deals in his *opus magnum* with the political and socio-cultural history of the Levant from the era of Alexander the Great until the demise of the Palmyrene Empire in AD 273, his study is limited in geographical terms to the Levant.⁵ Michael Sommer’s monograph from 2005, on the other hand, is a cultural history of the Near East and as such does not deal specifically with interstate relations in our period of civil war.⁶ Yet even Adrian Sherwin-White and Richard Sullivan, who both *do* focus on bilateral interaction, have dealt mainly with Pompey’s activities in the eastern Mediterranean in the 60s BC, and less so with the period of Roman civil war from 44 until 31.⁷ This disparity is odd given the fact that the evidence for Rome’s affairs with foreign powers in the Near East during this era of civil strife is not necessarily inferior to the source material for Pompey’s reorganisation of Asia Minor and the Levant. Even studies that do concentrate on the age of internal strife have neglected Rome’s foreign affairs in the Near East.⁸

1 The Near East

As with all studies that are limited to a specific geographical region, it is also in this case vital first to draw the boundaries of research – a task that is not as

⁵ Sartre (2001) 464-468 deals with the history of the province of Syria during our period of civil war.

⁶ Sommer (2005).

⁷ Sherwin-White (1984); Sullivan (1990).

⁸ Biographies of Augustus, Mark Antony, Brutus and Lepidus focus with regard to the period from 44 until 31 predominantly on the internal political conflicts that raged throughout Rome’s empire in those years: Gardthausen (1891); Bengtson (1977); Huzar (1978); Clarke (1981); Weigel (1992); Kienast (1999). The great Ronald Syme concentrates in his *Roman Revolution* (1939) regarding our period of civil war mainly on internal politics and changes in the ruling class. Rice Holmes (1928) is descriptive. Bleicken (1990) focuses on the Triumvirate as an administrative institution.

straightforward as it appears to be.⁹ The Near East as toponym is alien to the ancient world, having only found its origin in nineteenth-century European diplomacy, in which context it was used initially to refer roughly to the lands that belonged to the erstwhile Ottoman Empire, and in the course of the twentieth century with the disintegration of that realm more strictly to Anatolia, the areas on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean between modern Turkey and Egypt (often identified as the Levant) and lands in the Euphrates and Tigris basin. Soon after the term had crept into the language of western diplomacy, it was introduced into the fields of archaeology and (art) history.¹⁰ Since then, scholars of antiquity have identified the Near East with a variety of regions in Asia, depending on the period of study and the topic under consideration. Publications that focus on the earliest history of the Near East from about the fourth millennium until the onset of the Hellenistic Age in the last third of the first millennium BC, for example, have tended to regard the Near East to encompass a vast area stretching from the Ionian coast in western Anatolia to the eastern boundaries of Iran, from the Caucasus in the north to the Red Sea in the south.¹¹ In contrast, scholars dealing with the Roman era have commonly disregarded western Anatolia, placing the western boundary of the Near East more to the east in the Taurus mountain chains and Mount Amanus.¹²

The present thesis largely adopts the definition of the latter group, and holds the Near East to be limited in the northwest by Mount Amanus and the Taurus as far as the banks of the upper Euphrates near Melitene. The northern boundary is formed by the Caucasus. From there, the Near East stretches to the southeast into the Euphrates and Tigris basin. In the west, it covers the Levant and Egypt. My definition of the Near East, thus, corresponds for the most part to the

⁹ See also maps 1-5 for clarification.

¹⁰ For a brief historical overview of the usage of the toponym Near East by archaeologists and ancient (art) historians, see Butcher (2003) 9-11; Van De Mieroop (2007) 1-2.

¹¹ See e.g. Bienkowski / Millard (2000); Van De Mieroop (2007); Snell (2007).

¹² See e.g. Millar (1993); Butcher (2003).

one put forward by Millar in his *Roman Near East*, and encompasses to a large degree the region that is known as the Fertile Crescent.¹³

Besides practical, there are geopolitical reasons for demarcating the Near East as such and not to include – let us say – kingdoms and principalities in Asia Minor into the analysis. Rome had already established herself in Anatolia in the second century BC with the installation of the province of Asia in the years after the death in 133 of the Pergamene king Attalus III.¹⁴ The birth of the first Roman province in the Near East as delineated above followed upon the dissolution of the last Seleucid possessions in Syria in 64.¹⁵ At approximately that time, Rome established her third province in Asia Minor in Bithynia and Pontus; a second one had already been founded around the year 80 in Cilicia. Although changes in the geographical extent of all these provinces had occurred since their establishment, they were all still in existence by the time of Actium. New provinces would not be installed until sometime after this event. Thus, with direct Roman rule more profoundly present in Asia Minor than in the Near East, the relations maintained by Rome and Anatolian powers towards one another were of a different nature than the interstate dealings between Rome and Near Eastern kingdoms and principalities.

The less extensive manifestation of Rome in the regions to the east and south of the Amanus and the Taurus, however, is not the only ground for excluding Asia Minor from our discussion. Another reason why the Near East as defined above stands out from other regions is Parthia, the only power that could measure up to Rome in the period of civil war. In case of a potential clash between these two superpowers, Near Eastern kingdoms and principalities were, based on

¹³ Millar (1993) xi. The main difference between my and Millar's definition of the Near East is the latter's decision to leave out Egypt. For my reasons to include Egypt in my study, see below in the same section.

¹⁴ For more details on the installation of the province of Asia, see among others Sherwin-White (1984) 80-92.

¹⁵ On the dissolution of the Seleucid Kingdom and the installation of the province of Syria, see chapter 1.5.

their geographical location, more likely to become directly involved than their western Anatolian counterparts.¹⁶ Although the Asiatic realms could also be overrun by Parthian armies (as we shall see further below) the brunt of the attack would be borne by Armenia and Commagene, both kingdoms in the Near East.¹⁷ This circumstance had wide implications for the relations of the other Near Eastern realms and Rome towards one another. Since the defeat of the Pontic king Mithridates VI in 63, Asia Minor did not have a power left that could pose a serious threat to Rome. Geopolitical circumstances will thus have played less of a role in the relations that Rome had with western Anatolian kings. The proximity to Parthia and the potential Parthian political influence thus set apart the kingdoms and principalities to the south and east of the Taurus and east of the upper section of the Euphrates from the realms in Anatolia.

Most scholars focusing on the Near East in their publications have not covered Egypt.¹⁸ Studies that deal with the social and religious aspects of society in particular have made this decision,¹⁹ because Egypt is clearly distinct from the Levant and lands further to the east in this respect. Politically, however, Egypt forms an intricate part of the Near East. As it will become clear, the Ptolemaic dynasty did not only maintain relations with kings and princes of the Levant, it also became involved in the territorial distributions of the Near East as organised by Antony in the mid-30s BC. In the context of the political relations between Rome and Near Eastern kingdoms and principalities, Egypt simply cannot be excluded at the time of the internal strife.

¹⁶ See map I.

¹⁷ See chapter 8.1.

¹⁸ A notable exception in this respect is the grand study of the political relations between Rome and the Hellenistic kingdoms and principalities by Gruen (1984), who *does* include the Ptolemaic Kingdom in his analysis. His study, however, does not deal with the first century BC despite the fact that the two greatest Hellenistic realms emerging from Alexander's disintegrating empire (the Seleucid and Ptolemaic Kingdoms) survived well into the first century BC until 64 and 30 respectively, on which see chapters 1.5 and 9.4.

¹⁹ See e.g. Millar (1993).

2 The Civil War, 44-31 BC

The period of civil war that forms the chronological framework of this thesis set off with Caesar's assassination on the Ides of March 44 at the hands of a group of senators headed by the praetors M. Iunius Brutus and C. Cassius Longinus, and came to an end with Octavian's victory over Mark Antony and the Ptolemaic queen Cleopatra VII in the Battle of Actium. The era of thirteen years was characterised by a constant series of disputes between different factions within the Roman state, and occasional armed clashes. The aim of this section is to give a brief historical overview of the conflict in order to facilitate a better understanding of the political relations under examination in this thesis.²⁰

In the first year of the war, the centre of gravity of Rome's internal political disputes was situated in Italy and the province of Cisalpine Gaul. The war against the tyrannicides Brutus and Cassius, who in the course of 44 escaped Italy, and fled to the eastern Mediterranean, would not become a priority until sometime later in 43. The attention was in first instance focused on Antony, the consul of 44 who had managed in June by means of a plebiscite to exchange the province of Macedonia, which had been allotted to him in April, for Cisalpine Gaul and Gallia Comata, and towards the end of the year, when he tried to acquire it, he came into conflict with D. Iunius Brutus, who had been appointed by Caesar earlier in the year as proconsul to that province. Both men took to their weapons, and Antony eventually managed to lay siege on his opponent at Mutina. The eruption of war provoked the Senate to dispatch the consuls of 43, C. Vibius Pansa and A. Hirtius, to the hotbed to support D. Brutus against Antony. Octavian was also sent to the war, and, for this occasion, was awarded *propraetorian imperium* – his first official position. In April it came to two serious clashes, one at Forum Gallorum and one

²⁰ This outline in no way claims to be comprehensive. For more detailed historical overviews and analyses and sources, see Rice Holmes (1928) 1-164; Rawson (1992); Christ (1993) 424-463; Pelling (1996).

at Mutina. Although Hirtius died during the last battle and Pansa briefly afterwards, both military confrontations were won by the consular faction.

In the meantime, the two leading conspirators, Cassius and Brutus, had managed to obtain a position of power in the eastern Mediterranean. The two tyrannicides had left Italy at some point late in the summer, and instead of going to the two provinces allocated them (Cyrenaica and Crete) made their way to Syria and Macedonia respectively, where they arrived around the beginning of 43. In the course of the new year, Brutus succeeded on extending his hegemony to include Greece and Asia Minor, whereas Cassius consolidated his position in Syria. Both men were ultimately confirmed in their position by the Senate.

After the military clashes at Forum Gallorum and Mutina in April 43, Antony fled the battlefield and moved westwards where he eventually found allies among C. Asinius Pollio, proconsul of Farther Spain, M. Aemilius Lepidus, proconsul of Nearer Spain and Narbonese Gaul, and L. Munatius Plancus, proconsul of Transalpine Gaul. After his position over Cisalpine Gaul was confirmed by the passing of a law in early summer, Antony returned to his province and in October held a meeting with Lepidus and Octavian, the latter of whom in the intervening time had managed to be elected to one of the two consulships that had become vacant with the death of Hirtius and Pansa. Antony and Octavian now reconciled and along with Lepidus formed an alliance which in November by means of the *lex Titia* was given legal status making them *tresviri* or *triumviri rei publicae constituendae* (three men for setting the *res publica* in order). Their new positions gave Antony, Octavian and Lepidus consular powers for five years and the right to appoint the city magistrates for the same duration. The three men also divided the provinces in the West, whereby Antony retained Gallia Comata and Cisalpine Gaul, Lepidus Narbonese Gaul and Nearer Spain, and Octavian was

given Africa, Sicily and Sardinia. The first priority of the triumvirs was to wipe out the Republican power base that Brutus and Cassius had acquired in the eastern Mediterranean over the year. Before Antony and Octavian left for the East, though, they had to ensure that their enemies would not undermine their positions while they were in the East. Accordingly, the decision was made to leave Lepidus behind, and to render their foes harmless by placing them on a list of outlaws (the proscriptions). Antony and Octavian went to the East and eventually engaged in two battles with Brutus and Cassius at Philippi in Greece in 42. The encounter ended in a victory for the two triumvirs.

With the Republicans defeated, Antony and Octavian implemented a new division of the empire. The former was to move eastwards and settle affairs in Asia Minor and the Levant, whereas Octavian was to return to Italy and deal with the settlement of the veterans who fought at Philippi. The settlement of the veterans was a precarious matter with insufficient public land available in Italy. Accordingly, Octavian sought recourse to annex territories and give them to the troops. This policy unsurprisingly led to frustration among the dispossessed inhabitants of Italy. The unsatisfied people found in L. Antonius, brother of the triumvir and consul of 41, someone who gave a voice to their grievances and was willing to make a stand for them and take recourse to military force. It came to a clash at Perusia, and Octavian eventually managed to defeat L. Antonius in the beginning of 40.

Octavian's success alarmed Antony and prompted him to return from the East. An encounter between the troops of the two triumvirs was imminent, but did eventually not occur when the troops refused to fight. Antony and Octavian reconciled and decided on a redivision of the territories under their control (the so-called Pact of Brundisium). Octavian was given authority over the western provinces, Antony over the eastern ones, and Lepidus over Africa. The Pact solved some of the tension between the Octavian and Antony but did not bring the internal conflicts to an end. Sextus Pompeius, a son of Pompey the Great,

controlled the seas with his fleet and threatened the grain supply to Rome. The possibility of a shortage forced Octavian to conclude a treaty with Sextus at Misenum in 39. It was decided to give Sardinia, Corsica, Sicily and the Peloponnese to Sextus, and to promise him the consulship of 35. The agreement prompted Sextus to lift the blockade of Italy.

Two years later, in September 37, Antony, Octavian and Lepidus met at Tarentum to renew the Triumvirate for another five years after it had expired at the end of 38. In the meantime, the conflict with Sextus Pompeius had resumed, and Octavian was bound to remove the naval commander. The naval battles at Mylae and Naulochus in 36 were devastating for Sextus who fled to the East and was assassinated by Antony's men in 35. A year earlier, Lepidus had been removed from his command. In 33, the relations between the two remaining triumvirs escalated, and in 31 the two men made preparations for an armed clash which eventually occurred at Actium, and ended in a victory for Octavian. Antony and his consort Cleopatra had managed to flee the scene, but were finally defeated at Alexandria in 30. The downfall of Antony left Octavian as sole ruler over Rome.

3 Structure of the thesis

With the geographical extent of the Near East determined, and a brief outline of the civil war provided, it is time to explain exactly which kingdoms and principalities will be included in our study.²¹ For practical reasons, it has been decided to focus only on Rome's relations with those administrative entities that were headed by a monarch – whether a king, queen or a dynast carrying lesser titles such as ἐθνάρχης and φύλαρχος. Free cities, such as Tyre and Sidon, will thus not be taken into account.²² Equally omitted from the discussion are,

²¹ See maps 1-5 for clarification.

²² That these two cities were regarded as free during the time of the civil war, is illustrated by a passage in Josephus, *AJ* 15.95, which clarifies that Antony granted all coastal cities between the

obviously, those kingdoms and principalities for which no or very little evidence of political contact with Rome exists. Most notable in this respect were Osrhoene and Adiabene. The former of these two was located on the left bank of the Euphrates opposite Samosata, the latter south of Armenia to the east of the river Tigris.²³ Both realms had maintained a hostile stance towards the Romans at some point before the outbreak of the civil war. Adiabene rendered assistance in 69 to the Armenian king Tigranes II against L. Licinius Lucullus, the proconsul who had invaded Armenia in pursuit of the Pontic king Mithridates VI,²⁴ whereas Osrhoene actively supported the Parthians during the Roman campaign of 53 led by the proconsul M. Licinius Crassus.²⁵ Interesting as it would have been from this perspective to uncover how the relations between these two powers and Rome had developed in the age of civil war, a lack of evidence prevents us from undertaking such an analysis. Similar problems are in play with regard to Rome's political dealings with the Iberians, Albanians and the Rhambaeans, three peoples of which the former two inhabited different regions of the Caucasus and the latter an unknown area west of the Euphrates. Although political contact between the kings of these three communities and Rome for our period of civil war has not entirely eluded the source material, the interaction for each of these peoples is limited to a single or to two occasions. The Iberians and Albanians came in contact with Rome when a certain P. Canidius Crassus undertook a campaign into the Caucasus towards the end of 37, whereas the Rhambaeans were involved in an internal conflict between Pompeians and Caesareans that occurred in the province

river Eleutherus and Egypt to the Ptolemaic queen Cleopatra VII in the mid-30s BC with the exception of Tyre and Sidon, because both places had enjoyed freedom "from the time of their ancestors" ("ἐκ προγόνων"). Cf. *BJ* 1.361, which mentions the allotment of Tyre and Sidon to Cleopatra, but does not refer to the long period of freedom that the two cities had experienced. For further references to the history of Tyre, Sidon and other Near Eastern free cities in our period of Roman civil war, see among others Eiselen (1907) 76-77; Jones (1971) 259-260.

²³ For more details on the location and on the history of Osrhoene and Adiabene in the first century BC, see among others Sullivan (1990) 106-108; Luther (1999); Sommer (2005) 225-234. Cf. Duval (1892) 30-73, whose king list is now to be rejected because of errors in the chronology.

²⁴ Plutarch, *Luc.* 26-27.

²⁵ Dio, 40.20.1-21.1.

of Syria from 46 until 43. The Iberians also sent a contingent of auxiliary forces to support Cassius and Brutus at Philippi in 42. The dealings of these three peoples with Rome will, obviously, not be left out. Yet, as no more interaction is known to have taken place between them, the occasions for which we do have evidence will be dealt with in those chapters where they fit best.²⁶

Despite the exclusion of free cities, two kingdoms and several associations of people from our examination, the relations maintained by the majority of Near Eastern powers with Rome will still be analysed. The kingdoms and principalities in question are the following: Parthia, the Ptolemaic Kingdom, Judaea, the Princedom of Chalcis, the Emisenoï, Nabataea, Armenia, Media Atropatene and Commagene. Most of them share a common history concerning their origin. With the exception of the Ptolemaic Kingdom, Nabataea and Parthia, they all emerged from the Seleucid Kingdom at some point after the beginning of the second century BC. Although diplomatic relations with some of these powers by Rome were established soon afterwards, it was only with the arrival of Pompey the Great in the Near East around the middle of the 60s BC that the relations became more intense. It is well known that Pompey dismissed the Seleucid claims to Syria in 64 and established a Roman province in that region instead. He also reorganised the entire region, by replacing existing rulers and altering the territorial extent of several kingdoms and principalities. Almost all Near Eastern powers were affected quite drastically in this way. But other significant changes implemented by Rome do not seem to have occurred until sometime during the period of civil war, with the exception of some alterations in the internal government of Judaea,²⁷ and Pompey's measures thus had an enormous impact on how the political map of the Near East appeared on the eve of the civil strife in 44. This circumstance makes it vital to have a look at the reorganisation of the Near East as it took shape

²⁶ For Canidius' expedition into the Caucasus, see chapter 14.1. For the involvement of the Rhambaeans in the war between the Pompeians and Caesareans in Syria in the middle of the 40s BC, see chapter 5.1.

²⁷ See the introduction to chapter 4.

in the mid-60s BC before analysing the relations between Rome and Near Eastern kingdoms and principalities in the period from 44 until 31. Part I focuses therefore on the administrative changes that Pompey carried through in the Near East. As will become clear, one of his actions was the conclusion of *amicitia* (friendship) between some of the Near Eastern rulers and Rome. What it meant for the participating parties to be united by friendship is another issue on which Part I concentrates.

Part II is devoted to an inquiry into the political relations maintained by Rome on the one hand and the nine Near Eastern kingdoms and principalities identified above on the other hand in the period of civil war from 44 until 31. The approach is chronological. Part II.A deals with the interstate dealings for the period from the eruption of civil strife in 44 until the defeat of Brutus and Cassius at Philippi in 42; part II.B follows on from there and focuses on the time until Octavian's victory at Actium in 31. Within the two subparts, a critical analysis of the political interaction between Rome and Near Eastern realms is provided for each interstate relation separately. As some instances of political interaction involved more than one kingdom and/or principality, there will be an unavoidable overlap between certain chapters. In those cases, though, the exchanges are analysed each time from a different perspective. Since Nabataea, Armenia and Commagene are not attested to have had contact with Rome in the period from 44 until 42, these kingdoms do not appear in part II.A. The reason for dealing with the bilateral connections between 44 and 42 independently from the subsequent eleven years is related to the nature of the civil war. As we saw above, the internal strife did not revolve around one particular feud, but was characterised by various political power conflicts between members of the aristocracy, some of which culminated in an armed clash.²⁸ The two major conflicts during the internal strife turned out to be the clash between the tyrannicides and the triumvirs, resulting in

²⁸ See the outline of the civil war in section 2.

a victory for the latter at Philippi in 42, and the struggle between Octavian and Antony, ending in success for the former at Actium in 31. Since in the period prior to each of these clashes, the Near East was in hands of one of the leading participants of these with regard to both disputes, one of the contestants had acquired a position of power in the Near East – Cassius in 43 and 42, Antony from 41 until 31 – and since political contacts by rulers in that region with Rome were predominantly maintained with governors in the vicinity, it has been decided to focus in the first place on the period up till Philippi and subsequently the remainder of the civil war, in the expectation that differences in the relations can be detected between these two periods.

Following on from the analysis of the political relations between Rome and Near Eastern kingdoms and principalities, Part III will be dedicated to the question to what degree those interstate dealings were typical of our period of civil war. The purpose of this analysis is to identify what impact the civil war had on the relations between Rome and Near Eastern powers. In order to illuminate these issues a comparison is made with the conduct of Rome and Near Eastern political entities towards one another prior to 44.

4 Sources

Since the focus of this thesis is on interstate conduct and interaction, the source material consists predominantly of Greek and Latin literary texts. Epigraphic texts and coins do not offer a detailed narrative of political events and are thus of lesser help. Nevertheless, coinage and inscriptions are not ignored, as in some instances they can serve to strengthen the argument and provide us with useful insight into the foreign relations (especially with regard to the representation of interstate events).

The main literary sources of interest for our purpose are Plutarch's biographies of Brutus and Antony, Appian's *Civil Wars*, Cassius Dio's *Roman History*, Strabo's *Geography* and Flavius Josephus' *Jewish War* and *Jewish Antiquities*.²⁹ Vital as these texts are for our analysis, it is important to realise that none of them are particularly concerned with Rome's foreign relations and only deal with it if necessary for the main theme of their work. This makes it very likely that the literary sources only allow us to catch glimpses of the actual interaction that occurred between Rome and Near Eastern kingdoms and principalities. Another factor that needs to be borne in mind when using these works is the fact that almost all the works are written from the perspective of the Rome. Only Josephus has composed a historical work that focuses on one of the principalities with which this thesis deals: Judaea. For this reason, we are much better informed about the relations of Judaea with Rome than about the interstate dealings of other Near Eastern powers with Rome. It is further important that he himself was a native of the kingdom of which he wrote a history. He knew Judaea's society and as such provides us with valuable insights that can help to explain the conduct of Judaea's leaders towards Rome in the period of civil war. Regarding all the other kingdoms and principalities with which the present study deals, this native perspective is unfortunately missing.

5 *Client kings*

Before moving on to the discussion of Pompey's reorganisation of the Near East, it is important to elaborate on an important issue of terminology. For it may strike the reader as odd that none of the kings, queens and other dynasts mentioned throughout this work are characterised as "client kings" or "client rulers" of

²⁹ Unless indicated otherwise, all the texts and translations into English are taken from the relevant titles mentioned in the list of used editions and the list of used translations at the end.

Rome, despite the fact that several of them, with the exception of Parthia's sovereigns, have frequently been styled as such, predominantly in more general works on the political and social history of the Near East or of a particular kingdom in that region.³⁰ The absence of these terms is not a coincidence but the consequence of a deliberate choice. The belief that the language of *patrocinium* (patronage) and *clientela* misrepresents the relationship between Rome and the rulers on the fringe of her empire who were to some extent dependent on her underlies this decision. Certainly, even though the paucity of the language of *clientela* does not speak in favour of designating all monarchs whose positions were in some way dependent upon Rome as clients, the limited number of attestations for the patron-client terminology in the context of Rome's interstate affairs is in itself not a valid justification for abstaining from its use.³¹ It would thus theoretically still be possible for the summarily available evidence to vindicate the extensive application of the patron-client model to Rome's relations with rulers in the periphery, as realised by Ernst Badian and, to a lesser degree, by Percy Sands.³² A closer look at the relevant source material, however, should demonstrate that this view is to be rejected.

As it happens, in most known instances the patron-client terminology is used in a metaphorical sense as a means to illustrate to the reader, with concepts familiar to them, what type of relationship Rome *de facto* (not formally) had with rulers and communities.³³ When Cicero thus sketches a romanticised picture of Rome's conduct vis-à-vis kings, princes and communities during the bygone days of the Republic before Sulla, and concludes that her attitude "could be called more truly a *patrocinium* of the world than a dominion", he does not profess that Rome

³⁰ See e.g. Ball (2000) 30, who refers to "client king" and "client kingdoms"; Sartre (2001) 449, who explains which parts of Syria came under provincial rule in 64, and then proposes that "tout le reste resta confié à des princes clients".

³¹ Also acknowledged by Kaizer / Facella (2010b) 18.

³² Sands (1908); Badian (1958).

³³ That the language of *clientela* was used in a metaphorical sense by our ancient authors to describe Rome's foreign relations is now generally accepted. See among others Braund (1984) 23.

formally *was* patron of all people in her empire and beyond.³⁴ Cicero merely asserts that the behaviour of Rome towards the people inside and outside her domain in an idealised past bears resemblance to the conduct of a patron regarding his client. With the expression *patrocinium* employed as a metaphor, it is clear that the passage in question cannot serve as evidence for the existence of interstate *clientela*.³⁵

The language of *patrocinium* and *clientela* is likewise to be understood figuratively when Livy points to Rome's commitment to ensure the "*patrocinium* of Greek liberty" in a speech attributed to the Roman official T. Quinctius Flaminius in the context of the negotiations with ambassadors of the Seleucid king Antiochus III in 193 concerning the sovereignty over the Greek cities in Asia and in Greece. Clearly, Livy does not mean that Rome had the intention to guarantee her "patronage over Greek liberty" – whatever that would mean. Instead, he refers to Rome's assurance to warrant "the protection of Greek freedom".³⁶ In this instance, the term *patrocinium* is thus not indicative of the existence of an interstate patron-client relationship.³⁷

An allegorical use of the patron-client terminology is also encountered in a section of a letter by the first century AD Roman jurist Proculus, transmitted in Justinian's *Digesta*. The term *clientes* appears in a discussion on the conditions for the exercise of *postliminium*, the restoration of a person's free status upon return from captivity in the hands of an enemy.³⁸ Having stipulated the provisions for claiming these rights, Proculus offers an exposé of a free people:

³⁴ Cicero, *Off.* 2.27: "... *patrocinium orbis terrae verius quam imperium poterat nominari*" (LCL transl. adapted).

³⁵ For similar views and concomitant line of reasoning, see among others Gruen (1984) 160; Ferrary (1997) 114; Eilers (2002) 187; Kaizer / Facella (2010b) 21.

³⁶ Livy, 34.58.11: "*Patrocinium libertatis Graecorum*".

³⁷ Similar conclusions in Eilers (2002) 187 n.24; Kaizer / Facella (2010b) 21.

³⁸ For more details on *postliminium*, see among others Levy (1943); Imbert (1944); Sherwin-White (1973) 292-293; Coşkun (2009) 82-107.

“A free people is one which is not subject to the control of any other people; a *civitas foederata*, one which has either entered into friendship under an equal treaty or under a treaty [which] includes the provision that this people should with good will preserve the *maiestas* of another people. It has to be added that that other people is to be understood to be superior, not that [the federated] people is not free; and insofar as we understand our clients to be free, even if they are not our equals in authority, dignity or power, so also those who are bound to preserve our *maiestas* with good will are to be understood to be free”.³⁹

The text makes clear that a people bound by an unequal treaty to uphold the *maiestas* of another people – the Romans for example – enjoyed freedom in the same way as communities that had an equal compact. To illustrate that the inferior partner in an unequal treaty retained his free status, Proculus draws a parallel with clients who likewise rejoiced in freedom despite being in a position of subordination. The term *clientes* is in this context thus manifestly used as part of a comparison. The passage does not support in any way the view that the subservient partner of an unequal treaty *was* a client. Proculus merely provides an analogy using the language of *clientela* to clarify the status of communities bound by an unequal treaty.⁴⁰ The reference to *clientes* can accordingly not serve as evidence for Rome’s application of the patron-client model to its relations with kings, dynasts and associations of people.

The same conclusion is to be drawn with regard to an occurrence of the patron-client terminology in Suetonius’ biography of Augustus. The passage in

³⁹ Dig. 49.15.7.1: “*Liber autem populus est is, qui nullius alterius populi potestati est subiectus: siue is foederatus est item, siue aequo foedere in amicitiam uenit siue foedere comprehensum est, ut is populus alterius populi maiestatem comiter conseruaret. hoc enim adicitur, ut intellegatur alterum populum superiorem esse, non ut intellegatur alterum non esse liberum: et quemadmodum clientes nostros intellegimus liberos esse, etiamsi neque auctoritate neque dignitate neque uiri boni nobis praesunt, sic eos, qui maiestatem nostrum comiter conseruare debent, liberos esse intellegendum est*” (Watson transl. adapted).

⁴⁰ For similar conclusions, see among others Rich (1989) 124-125; Eilers (2002) 12-13, 188; Kaizer / Facella (2010b) 17.

question describes the honours that were bestowed upon Augustus by certain allied kings:

“[Augustus’, ed.] friends and allies among the kings each in their own realm founded a city called Caesarea, and all joined in the plan to contribute the funds for finishing the temple of Jupiter Olympius, which was begun at Athens in ancient days, and to dedicate it to his Genius; and they often left their kingdoms and presented themselves not only at Rome, but also when travelling through the provinces, showing him the daily attentions clad in toga and without the regal insignia in the manner of clients”.⁴¹

The text evidently does not assert that Augustus’ royal friends and allies actually *were* clients. Suetonius just draws an analogy between the homage paid by allied and friendly kings to the emperor and the daily attentions (*cotidiana officia*) that clients were due to their patron. This excerpt thus does not prove that Rome applied the patron-client model to her foreign relations.⁴² It merely demonstrates that Suetonius thought it suitable to use the language of *clientela* in a metaphorical sense to explain how the relations of Augustus with his royal friends and allies are to be understood. As we have seen, Suetonius was not the first one who believed it appropriate to draw parallels with the patron-client terminology to clarify the relationship between Rome and foreign communities and rulers; Proculus, Livy and Cicero, respectively writing a century and two centuries earlier, preceded him. Apparently, all four authors expected the language of patronage, with which their audience was familiar, to facilitate a better understanding of Rome’s interstate relations.⁴³ The four texts, however, do not equate these foreign relations with the patron-client association. None of them can thus serve to support the

⁴¹ Suetonius, *Aug.* 60: “*Reges amici atque socii et singuli in suo quisque regno Caesareas urbes condiderunt et cuncti simul aedem Iovis Olympii Athenis antiquitus inchoatam perficere communi sumptu destinaverunt Genioque eius dedicare; ac saepe regnis relictis non Romae modo sed et provincias peragranti cotidiana officia togati ac sine regio insigni more clientium praestiterunt*” (LCL transl. adapted).

⁴² But it may, as Millar (1996) 162 = (2004) 233 points out, “have been largely responsible for the invention of the misleading modern term ‘client kings’”.

⁴³ See for similar view with regard to the passage in Suetonius Kaizer / Facella (2010b) 16.

view according to which Rome considered kings, other rulers and communities on the fringe of her empire as clients in the technical sense of the word.

The language of *patrocinium* and *clientela* in the context of Rome's foreign affairs is not only employed in a metaphorical sense. When Cicero refers in his *Republic* to the people from the city of Massilia as "our clients", this is not to be understood figuratively.⁴⁴ The reference can nevertheless not be used as evidence for Rome viewing foreign communities as clients, since it forms part of a longer quotation that Cicero ascribes to the statesman P. Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus Africanus, famous for his capture of Carthage in 146. With the source of this quotation unknown, the mention of *clientes* does not prove that Rome applied the patron-client model upon foreign states.⁴⁵

On slightly different grounds, we can disregard the occurrence of the patron-client vocabulary in Livy's version of a speech that a Rhodian ambassador would have delivered before the Senate in 189 as evidence for the existence of interstate patronage. The envoy had come to ask Rome for protection against the imperialistic aspirations of the Pergamene king Eumenes II. He is said to have put his request into the following words:

"You have undertaken to defend against the slavery to a king the liberty of a most ancient people, most famed either from the renown of its achievements or from universal praise of its culture and learning; this *patrocinium* of a whole people taken in your *fides* and *clientela* it befits you to guarantee forever".⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Cicero, *Rep.* 1.43: "*nostri clientes*".

⁴⁵ Cf. Rich (1989) 125, who seems to regard it as a possibility that the text refers to a "personal patronage of Scipio over Massilia", even though he admits that there is no evidence to support this view, which has been taken by Gelzer (1969) 87-88 among others.

⁴⁶ Livy, 37.54.17: "*Gentis vetustissimae nobilissimaeque vel fama rerum gestarum vel omni commendatione humanitatis doctrinarumque tuendam ab servitio regio libertatem suscepistis; hoc patrocinium receptae in fidem et clientelam vestram universae gentis perpetuum vos praestare decet*" (LCL transl. adapted).

The passage seems at first sight to prove that Rome applied the patron-client model to her relations with foreign communities and rulers.⁴⁷ Yet, nothing is further from the truth. Livy's version of the speech is clearly based on the rendition of this address by the Greek historian Polybius, who does not point in any way to a patronage exerted by Rome over Rhodes.⁴⁸ The reference to *patrocinium* and *clientela* thus seems to be an invention by Livy. It is very likely that he used the language of patronage for rhetorical purposes, as it blends nicely into the remainder of the speech in which Rome is placed on a pedestal. The passage accordingly does not prove that Rome *formally* regarded foreign peoples as her clients.⁴⁹

The same conclusion can be drawn concerning a reference in Florus' epitome of Livy to the kingdom of Numidia being in the *fides* and *clientela* of the Senate and Roman people at some point before the reign of Jugurtha.⁵⁰ With Sallust, the author of the best known account of the Jugurthine War, not mentioning anything about Numidia being Rome's client, it is very likely that Florus' reference is not based on the actual existence of a patron-client relationship, but is merely used in a figurative way to stress the dependency of the Numidian kingdom upon Rome.⁵¹ The passage in Florus can thus not prove that Rome exerted patronage over certain foreign rulers.

With all references to the language of *patrocinium* and *clientela* in the context of Rome's interstate affairs discussed,⁵² it becomes apparent that none of them can

⁴⁷ Rich (1989) 125-126 argues that the passage attributes "to the Romans a patronage over the Greeks".

⁴⁸ Polybius, 21.22.5-21.23.12.

⁴⁹ Same conclusion and similar argumentation in Gruen (1984) 176; Ferrary (1997) 114; Eilers (2002) 186-187; Kaizer / Facella (2010b) 17-18.

⁵⁰ Florus, 1.36.3.

⁵¹ So also Gruen (1984) 159-160; Kaizer / Facella (2010b) 21. Cf. Rich (1989) 126, who uses the reference in Florus as evidence for the existence of interstate *clientela*.

⁵² The references to the interstate *clientela* in Ammianus, 17.12.15 and 18.2.16 can hardly be used as evidence of Rome applying the patron-client model to her relations with foreign kings and communities in our period, because it concerns references to practices in the fourth century AD.

prove that Rome applied the patron-client model to her relations with foreign rulers and communities.⁵³ As pointed out above, this does not inevitably mean that Rome abstained from the creation of interstate relations based on *clientela*. In an attempt to explain this lack of evidence, scholars have argued that the Romans refrained from describing kings and other foreign rulers as clients out of gallantry to prevent the subordinate position of certain rulers from being made explicit.⁵⁴ Burton and Kaizer / Facella have most recently convincingly argued, however, that ancient authors did not display any hesitation in describing kings in terms that expresses their inferiority with regard to Rome.⁵⁵ Tacitus, for instance, does not appear to have any difficulties with styling the Commagenian king Antiochus IV “the richest of the subject kings”.⁵⁶ A deliberate attempt to suppress the language of *clientela* where patron-client relations actually existed out of politeness can thus not clarify the lack of evidence.⁵⁷ It is much more likely that the reason for the scarce number of attestations to the vocabulary of *patrocinium* and *clientela* in the context of Rome’s foreign affairs in our sources needs to be sought in Rome’s reluctance to apply the patron-client model to her relations with foreign rulers and communities.

⁵³ In contrast, patronage of individual Roman aristocrats over foreign communities did exist. For more details and references to this type of patronage, see among others Ferrary (1997) 105-113; Eilers (2002) 109-144.

⁵⁴ See e.g. Mommsen (1864) 355 n.2; Badian (1958) 7; Hellegouarc’h (1963) 55; Brunt (1988) 394-395; Deniaux (1993) 4-5. Cf. Rich (1989) 124, who claims that “politeness often led Romans to use words like *amicus*... rather than *patronus* and *cliens* of what were in fact patronage relationships between individuals”. However, on p. 126 he seems to reject this explanation for the infrequent attestation of the patron-client terminology with regard to Rome’s foreign affairs.

⁵⁵ Burton (2003) 341-342; Kaizer / Facella (2010b) 18-19.

⁵⁶ Tacitus, *Hist.* 2.81: “*inservientium regum ditissimus*”. This case is also mentioned by Kaizer / Facella (2010b) 19.

⁵⁷ Equally unconvincing is the suggestion made by Rich (1989) 127 according to which the *clientela*-terminology “was only felt appropriate in a world where there could be a multiplicity of patrons”, such as *within* the Roman state. Since in the case of the relations maintained by foreign rulers with Rome, there could only be one patron (namely Rome), the language of patronage would be inappropriate. However, Rich does not explain with the use of clear reference to our sources why it would be inappropriate to use the language of patronage in the case of a sole patron. His suggestion that the near absence of the *clientela*-terminology in our extant sources with regard to Rome’s foreign relations is due to the unsuitability of employing the language of patronage in the case of only one patron, remains accordingly speculative.

The lack of evidence is not the only reason for me to refrain from applying the language of *clientela* to kings, queens or other rulers mentioned in this thesis. Describing the unequal relations that most of these dynasts *de facto* had with Rome in terms of *clientela* would also be a misrepresentation of those connections.⁵⁸ Within Roman society, a relationship based on *clientela* morally bound the two individuals to the exercise of certain duties, which generally pertained to the provision of support by the client in exchange for protection from the patron. In the realm of interstate relations, however, Rome did not feel morally obliged to render protection to certain rulers, as will hopefully become clear throughout this thesis. To style kings and dynasts as client kings would thus be a mischaracterisation of the relationship that these rulers had with Rome.⁵⁹ Employing the language of *patrocinium* and *clientela* to describe the connections between Near Eastern kings, queens and dynasts on the one hand and Rome on the other hand is thus best avoided. All those, though, who would still argue that the absence of the *clientela*-terminology in our sources with regard to Rome's interstate affairs should not dissuade us from applying it in a modern sense to all those relations with foreign rulers that were based on an exchange of rewards and aid,⁶⁰ need to be reminded of the following words once uttered by Fergus Millar:⁶¹

"It can even be claimed that we are entitled to apply to ancient societies the now established common-language (or sociological) use of terms like 'clientage' and 'patronage' without regard to the presence, or precise use, of equivalent terms in the society in question. But to say that is to say that curiosity about the exact nuances of ancient social and political relationship is superfluous".

⁵⁸ Bleicken (1964) 181; Kaizer / Facella (2010) 19-20.

⁵⁹ See also Kaizer / Facella (2010) 19.

⁶⁰ See e.g. Saller (1982); Wallace-Hadrill (1989).

⁶¹ Millar (1984) 17 = (2002) 137, as quoted by Kaizer / Facella (2010) 20.

PART I

PRELUDE

1 POMPEY'S REORGANISATION OF THE NEAR EAST, 66-63 BC

When in the beginning of 66 the tribune of the *plebs* C. Manilius managed to have the bill passed that conferred upon Pompey the command in the war against king Mithridates VI of Pontus and king Tigranes of Armenia, no-one could foresee that within three years almost the entire Near East would have undergone a grand-scale administrative reorganisation.¹ Although a political and territorial transformation of Pontus and Armenia might have been expected, the installation of a new Roman province in Syria at the cost of the last Seleucid possessions as well as the territorial reduction of Judaea were probably not envisaged. It was only after Mithridates' flight from Pontus across the Caucasus into the Bosphorus and Tigranes' submission in 66 that the future of the Seleucid Kingdom and the succession crisis within Judaea became important issues with which Pompey had to deal. It should thus not come as a surprise that none of our sources for the *lex Manilia* mention plans pertaining to the expansion of Rome's empire or to regime change in Judaea.² That does not, however, automatically mean that Pompey's military and diplomatic activities in Syria and the southern Levant were illegal. On the contrary, a statement made by Appian, according to which this law gave Pompey permission "to make war and peace as he liked, and to make friends or enemies in line with his own judgement", would suggest that Pompey was free to

¹ See map 1 for clarification.

² The original text of the *lex Manilia* is missing. For the potential terms of the command granted to Pompey, we rely entirely on the following literary sources: Asconius, 65; Plutarch, *Luc.* 35.7; *Pomp.* 30.1-5; Appian, *Mith.* 97; Velleius, 2.33.1-2; Livy, *Per.* 100; Dio, 36.42.4-36.43.2; Eutropius, 6.12.2. The famous speech that Cicero as praetor delivered before the People in support of Manilius' bill does, unfortunately, not provide us with any details concerning the terms of the command that was submitted to the assembly for approval. Sherwin-White (1984) 189 argues on the basis of the arguments that Cicero uses to garner support for the bill that the speech as it has been transmitted to us is "a masterpiece of misrepresentation". Kallet-Marx (1995) 321-323 focuses, in contrast, on contemporary attitudes to the eastern empire which, according to him, can be extracted from the speech.

make war upon any king or dynast in the Near East and to intervene in the internal affairs of their realms.³ Unfortunately, the accuracy of this testimonial is debatable, given the fact that Appian in the same context also makes an indisputable overstatement by claiming that Pompey was given command “of all the forces beyond the border of Italy”.⁴ It thus remains opaque whether the Manilian law actually endowed Pompey with a *carte blanche* to take any decision he deemed appropriate regarding the political future of the Near Eastern lands.⁵ Nevertheless, despite Appian’s embroidered portrayal of at least some of the powers that arose from the *lex Manilia*, it seems to be difficult to imagine that Pompey was *prohibited* from dealing with the political situation in the Near East at all. It was impossible that a conflict could occur with another Roman promagistrate, as the lands in this region had yet to be placed under provincial administration. Moreover, Pompey’s *acta* would only be subject to ratification by

³ Appian, *Mith.* 97: “ὅπη θέλοι, συντίθεσθαί τε καὶ πολεμεῖν, καὶ φίλους ἢ πολεμίους οὓς δοκιμάσειε ποιεῖσθαι”.

⁴ Appian, *Mith.* 97: “ὅση πέραν ἐστὶ τῆς Ἰταλίας”. Cf. Plutarch, *Pomp.* 30.1, who can also be accused of misrepresenting the powers with which Pompey had been endowed when claiming that the Roman supremacy was placed into the hands of one man.

⁵ Cf. Gelzer (1949) 273 n.17, who claims on the basis of Dio, 37.7.1 that Appian’s statement, according to which Pompey had the freedom to declare war and to make peace as he liked, is an exaggeration. The passage in Dio informs us that Pompey refrained from undertaking a military campaign against the Parthian king Phraates III in 64 despite requests made by the Armenian king Tigranes to do so. The Roman commander would have put forward as a reason for his decision that he would not have been assigned such an expedition. However, Dio presents this professed reason as a pretext (πρόφασιν ποιησάμενος). Dio can, therefore, not be used as evidence to regard Appian’s aforementioned statement as an exaggeration. Sherwin-White (1984) 190 seems to utter doubts similar to the ones brought forward by Gelzer concerning the accuracy of Appian’s statement. Although he does believe that Pompey had been granted the authority to make war and peace and to conclude alliances, he proposes that “these powers were limited to the context of the Anatolian provinces and the war with” Mithridates and Tigranes. Yet, despite the evidence for the transfer of the provinces of Bithynia and Cilicia to Pompey (Dio, 36.42.4; Plutarch, *Pomp.* 30.1), it would go too far to argue on the basis of references to this assignment in the literary sources that the right to decide about peace and war, and the prerogative to form friendships, was restricted to these provinces and to the context of the war against Mithridates and Tigranes. Even though it cannot be excluded that the *lex Manilia* set a boundary on the territorial extent of Pompey’s powers, it is evident that none of our sources make any mention that Pompey breached the terms of the law when in 63 he waged war in Judaea and allegedly even planned to inspect the Nabataeans – areas clearly situated beyond the confines of the Anatolian provinces as well as the erstwhile empires of Mithridates and Tigranes. On the territorial extent of Tigranes’ empire, see below.

the Senate and People of Rome upon his return to Italy.⁶ The distance stretching between Rome and the eastern Mediterranean in conjunction with the rapidly changing political circumstances in Asia Minor and the Near East would have made it problematic for Pompey to react adequately to events if he had to ask for endorsement any time he intended to wage war or wished to conclude peace and friendship.⁷ The diplomatic and military activities undertaken by Pompey and his lieutenants in the Levant were thus not necessarily illegal. Yet, whatever the precise privileges were with which he was invested, it is at least clear that the Roman commander realised a wide-ranging and deeply penetrating administrative rearrangement of almost the entire Near East within a period of three years.⁸ It needs to be analysed in what way the kingdoms and principalities that are attested to have maintained political relations with Rome in the period of civil war from 44 until 31 were affected by this reorganisation. The discussion will in this respect not merely focus on the details of the administrative changes, but also on the circumstances under which Pompey implemented alterations. Some of the kings and princes whose realms were affected by the reforms also concluded friendship (*amicitia* or φιλία) with Rome. The exact implications of such an association for the Near Eastern rulers in question will be examined as well.

1.1 The end of the Great Armenian Empire

The earliest of Pompey's territorial and administrative reorganisations of kingdoms and principalities in the Near East to which our sources bear witness

⁶ Pompey wished to have his *acta* ratified upon his return from the East. Although he initially faced senatorial opposition, with the support of Caesar he eventually managed to have his *acta* approved in 59 (Cicero, *Att.* 1.14.2, 6; 2.16.2; 1.18.6; 1.18.3; 1.18.5; 1.19.4; 1.20.5; Velleius, 2.44.2; Plutarch, *Luc.* 42.6; *Cat. min.* 31.1-2; *Pomp.* 48.3 Appian, *BCiv.* 2.9; Suetonius, *Iul.* 19.2; Dio, 37.49.2-50.1; 38.7.5). See also: Williams / Williams (1988) *passim*; Seager (2002) 81-85, 88.

⁷ So also Sherwin-White (1984) 188; Seager (2002) 52.

⁸ The *imperium* with which the *lex Manilia* invested Pompey has been subject to much debate. For the latest analysis with bibliography, see Koehn (2010).

was carried out at some point in 66 following Mithridates' expulsion from Pontus and subsequent escape to Colchis. Although Pompey was initially anxious to hunt down the Pontic king, he decided, after his enemy had reached the river Phasis in the western Caucasus, to suspend the pursuit and instead to proceed eastwards to launch an invasion into Armenia.⁹ The ruler of this kingdom, Tigranes, had collaborated with his father-in-law Mithridates, and was now to pay the price for his behaviour.¹⁰ Already in 71 or 70, the Armenian king had infuriated the Romans by his reluctance to extradite the Pontic monarch who had sought refuge with him in order to avoid falling into the hands of the proconsul L. Licinius Lucullus.¹¹ Yet, more recently, those ill feelings towards Tigranes seem to have been aggravated when Rome became aware of the provision of an army in 68 by the Armenian ruler to Mithridates. With these forces, the Pontic king managed to inflict a devastating defeat upon Lucullus' legate C. Valerius Triarius at Zela in 67, and to

⁹ On the hostilities between Pompey and Mithridates in 66 and the expulsion of the Pontic king from the heartland of his realm into Colchis, see among others Magie (1950) 354-356; Van Ooteghem (1954) 207-214; Sherwin-White (1984) 191-193.

¹⁰ This view is based on Appian, *Mith.* 104, who claims that "Pompey marched against Armenia, making it a cause of war against Tigranes that he had assisted Mithridates" ("ὁ Πομπήιος ἐστράτευσεν ἐς Ἀρμενίαν, ἔγκλημα ἐς Τιγράνη τιθέμενος ὅτι συνεμάχει Μιθριδάτη").

¹¹ Lucullus had sent Ap. Claudius Pulcher as envoy to the Armenian king with demands for the extradition of Mithridates (Plutarch, *Luc.* 19.1, 21.6; Memnon, *BNJ* 434, F1 31.2; cf. Appian, *Mith.* 83 who mentions the demands, but not the embassy consisting of Ap. Claudius). Tigranes' subsequent refusal to give up his father-in-law has been mentioned by Plutarch, *Luc.* 21.7, 23.6; Appian, *Mith.* 84 and Memnon, *BNJ* 434, F1 31.2. None of these three authors provide us, unfortunately, with any clear indication concerning the year in which Tigranes rejected Rome's order to deliver up Mithridates. The meeting between the Armenian king and Claudius Pulcher can, at any rate, not have taken place before Mithridates made his way to Armenia (Cicero, *leg. Man.* 21-22 with 23; Plutarch, *Luc.* 19.1, 22.1; Appian, *Mith.* 82; *Syr.* 49; Memnon, *BNJ* 434, F1 30.1 with 31.1, 35.3, 38.1). The earliest possible year in which this event can be dated is 72. The evidence for this early date is discussed by Broughton (1952) 106-109, 118. Cf. Magie (1950) 336; Sherwin-White (1984) 172-173; McGing (1984) 17; McGing (1986) 151 and Keaveney (1992) 91, who are all of the belief that Mithridates sought refuge in Armenia in 71. It is, however, more likely that Tigranes' rebuff occurred nearer to the Roman invasion of Armenia in 69, as it was the rejection of the demands announced by Ap. Claudius that seems to have triggered the offensive against the Armenian monarch (Plutarch, *Luc.* 23-24; Appian, *Mith.* 84). For Ap. Claudius to have brought forward Rome's ultimatum at some point in 71 or 70 is therefore most likely. Broughton (1952) 107 with 125 seems to opt for these two years as well. On the invasion of Armenia undertaken by Lucullus in 69 and 68, see among others Sherwin-White (1984) 176-185; Keaveney (1992) 99-128.

pave the way for the recovery of his kingdom.¹² It can thus not engender any surprise that Rome was eager to see Pompey undertaking disciplinary measures against Tigranes for his alliance with the Pontic king. The fact that earlier in 66 Tigranes had refused to grant Mithridates' request for shelter when he was on the run from his Roman opponents, proved to be of no avail in averting the invasion.¹³ Rome held the Armenian king at least partly responsible for its reverses in 67, and was fervent to settle the old score.

The attack on Armenia was initiated sometime in 66 following the expulsion of Mithridates from Pontus and the foundation of a colony called Nicopolis in the conquered land for the benefit of the Roman soldiers.¹⁴ As Pompey drew near to the river Araxes, he was approached by a homonymous son of Tigranes, who offered him his services as a guide.¹⁵ The prince had already been involved in a severe conflict with his father for a while and had just been defeated in battle.¹⁶ He would have escaped to king Mithridates, had the Roman advancement earlier in the year not forced the Pontic ruler to fall back on one of the last remaining provinces of his realm.¹⁷ Learning of the fate that Mithridates had overcome, Tigranes the Younger thus decided – possibly with the consent of the Parthian king Phraates III – to seek refuge with Pompey in the hope to be

¹² The provision of troops to Mithridates: Appian, *Mith.* 88. The defeat inflicted upon Triarius and recovery of Pontus: Cicero, *leg. Man.* 25-26; Plutarch, *Luc.* 35.1; Appian, *Mith.* 88-89; Dio, 36.12-13.

¹³ Plutarch, *Pomp.* 32.9; Dio, 36.50.1.

¹⁴ Dio, 36.50.3 gives the reference to the colonisation of Nicopolis.

¹⁵ Velleius, 2.37.3; Dio, 36.51.3; Appian, *Mith.* 104. Cf. Plutarch, *Pomp.* 33.1, who claims that "Pompey invaded Armenia on the invitation of the young Tigranes" ("Πομπήιος δὲ εἰς Ἀρμενίαν ἐνέβαλε τοῦ νέου Τιγράνου καλοῦντος αὐτόν"). This statement does not, however, necessarily denote that Pompey had not already himself decided to attack Armenia. We have already seen that Tigranes' collaboration with Mithridates formed one of the main driving forces behind the military campaign against Armenia. Cf. Heftner (1995) 234, who even points out that Pompey did not need to receive a request from Tigranes the Younger to invade Armenia, as the *lex Manilia* would already have conferred the war against king Tigranes upon the Roman commander.

¹⁶ Dio, 36.51.2 mentions the king's triumph over his son. For more details on the revolt of Tigranes the Younger against his father, see among others Manandian (1963) 156-158, 169-170; Chaumont (2001-2002) 225-230.

¹⁷ Dio, 36.51.3.

treated leniently.¹⁸ The Roman commander proved willing to employ the young prince as an advisor, and together they marched into the direction of the capital Artaxata. As the two men made their way to Armenia's administrative centre, they received the submission of several cities along the route.¹⁹ Tigranes the Elder must soon have realised that he did not hold the winning cards and that a potential military confrontation could be fatal for him. With the swift progress of the Roman armies, any hope of a successful outcome in the case of an armed clash vanished

¹⁸ Dio, 36.51.2-3 and Appian, *Mith.* 104 both claim that Tigranes the Younger sought refuge with Pompey. The two authors differ in opinion, however, on the circumstances under which the Armenian prince fled to the Roman commander. Whereas Dio claims that the escape to Pompey took place after Tigranes the Elder had overcome his son in battle, Appian makes clear that Tigranes the Younger was with the Parthian king Phraates III when Pompey came and secured the Arsacid king's approval before embarking on his mission to seek asylum with the Roman commander. Nothing is said in Appian's account about a defeat in battle that would have prompted Tigranes the Younger to make an escape to Pompey. On the contrary, the author explains that the rebellious prince fled to Phraates after his father had overwhelmed him in battle. That defeat refers, however, in all likelihood not to the loss that Tigranes the Younger had suffered in 66 at the hands of the Armenian king (mentioned by Dio, 36.51.2), but to an earlier military confrontation. Although such an earlier clash has not explicitly been reported in any other source, Dio does refer to the revolt of the Armenian prince (36.50.1) against his father prior to the escape to Phraates. This means that there is at least some ground to believe that the confrontation between the Armenian king and his son to which Appian refers is not identical to the clash in 66 mentioned by Dio (36.51.2). That leaves us with two contradictory accounts of the events leading up to the escape of Tigranes the Younger to Pompey, none of which can be categorically dismissed. Similar to Seager (2002) 55, I have tried to combine the two sources by stating that Tigranes the Younger might have received Phraates' consent to seek refuge with Pompey. A different attempt to harmonise these two versions has been made by Sullivan (1990) 285, who surmises two meetings between Tigranes the Younger and Pompey: one would have taken place after the confrontation between the Armenian king and his son in 66, as mentioned by Dio (36.51.2), and the other one prior to this event. Although the possibility of such an early meeting cannot be excluded, the source material does certainly not support it. Even Appian's account cannot serve as evidence for such an early meeting. Appian maintains that Tigranes the Younger "took refuge with Pompey as a suppliant" ("κατέφυγεν ὁ παῖς ἱκέτης ἐς τὸν Πομπήϊον"). Yet, it is difficult – if not impossible – to imagine why the Armenian prince would have fled to Pompey as a suppliant before the clash with his father. It seems therefore better to reject Sullivan's hypothesis of two meetings and to negate the existence of an early encounter between Tigranes the Younger and Pompey until conclusive proof can be provided.

¹⁹ Dio, 36.51.3; Plutarch, *Pomp.* 33.2. On Pompey's potential route to Artaxata, see Manandian (1963) 170-172.

into thin air. The king therefore decided to avoid the battlefield and to offer his surrender to the victorious Roman commander.²⁰

With the capitulation of Tigranes secured, Pompey turned his attention to the reorganisation of Armenia and the territories over which his adversary had extended Armenia's hegemony since the beginning of his reign in the mid-90s BC.²¹ The decision was made to reinstate Tigranes as king over his paternal kingdom, but to impose the payment of 6,000 talents upon him as an indemnity for the war. The Armenian king was also to relinquish his claims on domains that he had conquered earlier during his reign,²² most notably the areas situated west of the Euphrates. The Armenian ruler had penetrated those lands around the middle of the 80s BC, and soon managed to oust the Seleucids and take over their possessions in Syria. In the following decade, Tigranes gradually extended his power base northwards into Cilicia Pedias and southwards into Phoenicia.²³ The king was forced to abandon most of those annexed territories when Lucullus invaded Armenia in 69. Yet, he still laid claim to all those lands, and it was those claims that Pompey declared void in 66.²⁴ The Roman commander also removed from Armenian rule portions of Cappadocia that Tigranes had annexed in 67.²⁵ East of the Euphrates, Iberia, Albania and Media Atropatene were freed from the Armenian yoke, and given their independence.²⁶ The Armenian possessions in Adiabene and Mesopotamia, which Tigranes had taken away from the Parthians in the first ten years of his reign, returned to their former owners and were to

²⁰ Dio, 36.52.1-3; Plutarch, *Pomp.* 33.2-3; *Comp. Cim. Luc.* 3.4; Appian, *Mith.* 104; Velleius, 2.37.4; Cicero, *Sest.* 27.58; Valerius Maximus, 5.1.9; Livy, *Per.* 101; Eutropius, 6.13; Florus, 1.40.27. On the circumstances that prompted king Tigranes to submit to Pompey, see Manandian (1963) 171-172.

²¹ In order to facilitate a better understanding of the reorganisation of Armenia, see also maps 1, 2, 4, 5.

²² Appian, *Mith.* 105; Plutarch, *Pomp.* 33.4; Dio, 36.53.2-5; Strabo, 11.14.10; Velleius, 2.37.5; Cicero, *Sest.* 27.58; Valerius Maximus, 5.1.9; Livy, *Per.* 101; Florus, 1.40.27; Eutropius, 6.13.

²³ On the annexation of lands in Syria, Phoenicia and Cilicia Pedias, see among others Manandian (1963) 43-46; Hewsen (1985) 68-69; Sullivan (1990) 102-105.

²⁴ On the territories that Tigranes abandoned during Lucullus' offensive into Armenia, see among others Manandian (1963) 123-124; Sullivan (1990) 280-281.

²⁵ On the conquest of Cappadocia, see Sullivan (1990) 281.

²⁶ Sullivan (1990) 292; 295-296.

some extent placed under local rule, as far as these territorial changes had not yet occurred when Lucullus launched a campaign into northern Mesopotamia in 68.²⁷ Sophene, one of Tigranes' earliest acquisitions after his accession to the throne, was given to Tigranes the Younger.²⁸ It remains unclear whether along with this latter region Gordyene, an area located to the south of Armenia proper, was also awarded to Tigranes the Younger, as Appian suggests.²⁹ The possibility can at any rate not be ruled out, despite the fact that the author erroneously places both Sophene and Gordyene in Armenia Minor – a district located west of the Euphrates, whereas Sophene and Gordyene were situated east of the river.³⁰ Yet, whatever territories were exactly allocated to Tigranes the Younger, it is certain that he soon ended up imprisoned as a result of a conflict with Pompey, and saw

²⁷ Although none of the authors who elaborate on Pompey's reorganisation of Armenia explicitly refer to lands in Mesopotamia or Adiabene that Tigranes would have been obliged to abandon, the termination of Armenian rule within these two districts can still be surmised. Velleius, 2.37.5 clearly explains that the "sovereignty of the king was limited to Armenia" ("*finis imperii regii terminatus Armenia*") as a result of the territorial redistribution of Tigranes' former empire, and a statement made by Dio, 36.53.2, according to which the Armenian ruler was restored to "all his hereditary domain" ("τὴν πατρῶαν πᾶσαν ἀρχήν"), but lost "what had been acquired by him" ("προσκτηθέντα ὑπ' αὐτοῦ") later during his reign, seems to point into the same direction. Similarly Appian, *Mith.* 105 clarifies that Tigranes was to surrender "the realm that he had newly acquired" ("τὴν δὲ ἐπίκτητον αὐτὸν ἀρχήν ἐκέλευεν ἥδη μεθεῖναι"). The fact that the latter two authors do name the territories west of the Euphrates, but refrain from any explicit reference to the removal of possessions in Mesopotamia and Adiabene, does not necessarily render their statements inaccurate. Sherwin-White (1984) 194 has convincingly shown on the basis of a passage in Plutarch, *Pomp.* 33.4 which explains that Tigranes had to give up his claims on territories already taken from him by Lucullus in 69 and 68, that the Armenian areas in northern Mesopotamia were officially removed from the king's realm by Pompey. The city of Nisibis (Dio, 36.6.2-7.3; Plutarch, *Luc.* 32.4-5; cf. Eutropius, 6.9) was located in this district and had definitely been captured by Lucullus in 68 in spite of the fact that Plutarch fails to mention it. Cf. Asdourian (1911) 46, who claims that Pompey was allowed to retain his Parthian conquests. On the transfer of the Armenian possessions in Mesopotamia and Adiabene to more local control, see among others Sullivan (1990).

²⁸ Plutarch, *Pomp.* 33.4; Dio, 36.53.2.

²⁹ Appian, *Mith.* 105. Asdourian (1911) 46; Will (1967) 422 and Wirth (1983) 18 prefer Appian's interpretation, but do not provide any arguments to support this opinion.

³⁰ Similar: Manandian (1963) 175; Sullivan (1990) 285; Heftner (1995) 239. Cf. Chaumont (2001-2002) 231, who rejects Appian's version according to which both Sophene and Gordyene were allotted to Tigranes the Younger; Chaumont favours the accounts by Plutarch and Dio, but fails to provide compelling grounds. Appian's geographical error cannot justify the view that only Sophene had been awarded to the Armenian prince. The majority of scholarship on this issue uncritically follow the tradition transmitted by Plutarch and Dio: Grousset (1947) 98; Gelzer (1949) 94; Magie (1950) 357-358; Van Ooteghem (1954) 216; Chahin (1987) 236; Seager (2002) 56.

himself deprived of his newly awarded realm.³¹ Appian informs us that Sophene and Gordyene were subsequently given to king Ariobarzanes of Cappadocia.³² The evidence pointed out by Thérèse Frankfort seems to illustrate, however, that Sophene was reverted to the control of the Armenian king.³³ The same can be said for the status of Gordyene after the deposition and incarceration of Tigranes the Younger.³⁴ If this district had been assigned in the first place to the king's son, it would now have been placed under the rule of Tigranes the Elder as a dispute with the Parthian king Phraates III in 65 concerning the control over this district demonstrates. After the Parthians had invaded Gordyene in that same year, Pompey had his legate L. Afranius successfully driving out his enemies from the area and transferring it back to Tigranes.³⁵ Although it cannot be excluded that in the year preceding this event Gordyene was placed under the rule of Ariobarzanes, it is much more likely, as Plutarch implies, that the area had already been back into the hands of the Armenian king before the Parthian ruler attempted to seize it.³⁶ The so-called "Seventy Valleys", which formed a part of the realm of Tigranes' predecessor Artavasdes I, were in all likelihood located in this district.³⁷ When this predecessor passed away (whether by natural causes or not), Tigranes, who had been a hostage at the Parthian court, was released and acceded

³¹ Dio, 36.53.3-4 claims that Tigranes the Younger was taken captive on account of his refusal to deliver up the Armenian treasuries that were kept in his dominion. Cf. Appian, *Mith.* 105 who believes that the incarceration of the prince was related to a plot devised against Tigranes the Elder. Plutarch, *Pomp.* 33.5 proposes on the other hand that displeasure with the territorial distributions eventually prompted the prince to offend Pompey, who then had him imprisoned. It is logical that Tigranes the Younger was dissatisfied with Pompey's measures given the fact that he had helped him against Tigranes the Elder. Whatever the circumstances under which Pompey threw the king's son into chains, it is clear that the prisoner was eventually staged in his triumph in 61. What subsequently happened to Tigranes the Younger is not entirely clear. Cf. Chaumont (2001-2002) 237-245, who analyses the different versions concerning the prince's fate.

³² So also Will (1967) 422.

³³ Frankfort (1963) 186-187. So also Sherwin-White (1984) 195; Chahin (1987) 236; Seager (2002) 56; Cf. Sullivan (1990) 175, 282, who believes that Sophene reverted to Cappadocian rule.

³⁴ Frankfort (1963) 186.

³⁵ Plutarch, *Pomp.* 36.2; Dio, 37.5.3-4. On the dispute between Tigranes and Phraates in 65 and 64 concerning the sovereignty over Gordyene, see among others Sherwin-White (1984) 222-224.

³⁶ See previous note.

³⁷ Strabo, 11.14.15; Sherwin-White (1984) 223; Syme (1995) 55.

to the Armenian throne. For his release he paid as a ransom the “Seventy Valleys”. Tigranes’ later re-acquisition of this district formed thus merely a restoration of his paternal kingdom. As such, the restoration of lands in Gordyene to Tigranes by Pompey does not contradict the statement by Dio that Tigranes was restored to his hereditary domain.

The reorganisation of Armenia carried out by Pompey thus changed the political landscape of the Near East entirely. Almost all the kingdoms and principalities that had been under Tigranes’ control regained their independence, whereas dynasts that had only lost parts of their possessions to the Armenian ruler saw them returned. Tigranes himself was restricted to his hereditary kingdom – probably enlarged with Sophene after the arrest of his rebellious son. Extensive as the territorial losses were for Tigranes, the changes that Pompey implemented could have worked out much worse for him taking into account his previous opposition against the Roman cause. The king had accordingly no reason for complaint. On the contrary, as far as Dio is concerned, Pompey did not merely restore Tigranes to his paternal realm, he “shortly afterwards” also “enrolled him among the friends and allies of the Roman people”.³⁸ What this measure precisely meant for the relations between the king and Rome has not been clarified by the historian. The conferment of the title does at least show that Pompey regarded the Armenian sovereign to be a reliable ruler now that he had become more dependent upon Rome for the future of his position.³⁹

³⁸ Dio, 36.53.6: “ἐκεῖνον ἔς τε τοὺς φίλους καὶ ἔς τοὺς συμμάχους οὐ πολλῶ ὕστερον ἐσέγραψε”.

³⁹ Potential further political implications of the formation of friendship and alliance will be discussed below (see 1.4).

1.2 War in the Caucasus and the relations with the Parthians

With the restoration of Tigranes to the kingship secured and the territorial rearrangement of the former Armenian empire implemented towards the end of 66, Pompey moved northwards into the Caucasus and came into conflict with some of the peoples there – most notably the Albanians who were ruled by a certain king (βασιλεύς) Oroeses and inhabited the eastern regions towards the Caspian Sea, and the Iberians who were led by king (βασιλεύς) Artoces and lived to the west of them occupying the ridges that formed the link between the mountainous regions of Armenia and the Caucasian highlands.⁴⁰ The hostilities were allegedly initiated by the Albanians out of fear for an attack by Pompey who was approaching their districts during the winter.⁴¹ The ‘preventive’ assault is said to have surprised the Romans, but Pompey eventually managed to gain the upper hand, and made peace with his opponents.⁴² In 65, the Roman general launched an attack against the Iberians, defeated them and succeeded in concluding an alliance with their king, the exact terms of which remain unclear.⁴³ Pompey thereupon marched westwards into Colchis, from where he is said to have planned to move northwards to Bosphorus – the region where the Pontic king Mithridates had sought refuge a year earlier. The hostile attitude of the tribes living in the areas north of the Caucasus as well as the lack of harbours for the fleet to secure sufficient supplies, however, forced Pompey to return to Pontus via the Caucasus. The decision was made to put up a sea blockade in the hope that this measure

⁴⁰ Plutarch, *Pomp.* 34-35 and Dio, 36.54.1-37.5.2 form our main sources for Pompey’s wars in the Caucasus against the Albanians and Iberians. See also Strabo, 11.1.6, 11.3.5, 11.4.5; Velleius, 2.40.1; Livy, *Per.* 101; Orosius, 6.4.8; Eutropius, 6.14.1. Cf. Appian, *Mith.* 103, who places the war against the Albanians and Iberians before the submission of Tigranes to Pompey. See also maps 1 and 2.

⁴¹ Dio, 36.54.1.

⁴² Plutarch, *Pomp.* 34.2-4; Dio, 36.54.2-5; Eutropius, 6.14.1; Orosius, 6.4.8.

⁴³ Dio, 37.1.1-2.7 says that Artoces made an alliance (συνηλλάγη) with Pompey. Cf. Plutarch, *Pomp.* 34.4-5; Eutropius, 6.14.1 and Orosius, 6.4.8 who do not mention the conclusion of an alliance.

would force Mithridates to surrender.⁴⁴ In the meantime, Pompey advanced against the Albanians who had revolted once more. Yet again, the Roman commander proved victorious and made peace with them. Subsequent truces with some other tribes marked the ultimate end of the Caucasian campaigns.⁴⁵

A clear and unambiguous explanation for Pompey's wars in the Caucasus cannot be given. Some of our ancient authors have us believe that the hostilities against the Albanians and the Iberians and neighbouring groups were purely accidental. Livy's *Periochae* explain, for example, that the decision to take up the arms had been induced by the refusal to let the Roman armies pass the Caucasus,⁴⁶ and Plutarch's statement according to which Pompey aimed to proceed against Mithridates, and merely "out of necessity passed through the peoples dwelling about the Caucasus Mountains" has the same implication.⁴⁷ Despite these attestations, though, the duration of the wars against the Albanians and Iberians as well as the course followed by the Roman troops demonstrate that Pompey did not merely intend to neutralise the armed resistance that he encountered in the Caucasus on the way to the Bosphorus and on the return journey. Part of his purpose lay in the Caucasus. If Pompey had gone to Colchis with the intention to chase Mithridates, he would have travelled from Artaxata northwards across the Cyrus River and via Iberia.⁴⁸ Instead, he moved eastwards at the Cyrus River and camped his army for winter near Albanian territory.⁴⁹ This diversion from the route can only be made understandable if Pompey had some business to transact in the Caucasus. That a military expedition against the Albanians and Iberians was planned – or at least anticipated – is thus very likely. What the exact rationale of

⁴⁴ Dio, 37.3.1-3; Plutarch, *Pomp.* 35.1; Velleius, 2.40.1. See also Appian, *Mith.* 103 who refers to Pompey's pursuit of Mithridates into Colchis, but places the war against the Albanians and Iberians before the submission of Tigranes to Pompey, unlike the other authors.

⁴⁵ Dio, 37.3.3-5.2; Plutarch, *Pomp.* 35.1-3.

⁴⁶ Livy, *Per.* 101.

⁴⁷ Plutarch, *Pomp.* 34.1: "αὐτὸς ἐβάρδιζε διὰ τῶν περιουκούντων τὸν Καύκασον ἐθνῶν ἀναγκαίως".

⁴⁸ Sherwin-White (1984) 196-197 with references to literature and sources.

⁴⁹ Strabo, 11.3.4-5; Dio, 36.53.5-54.1.

the wars waged upon the peoples in this region was, however, is subject to scholarly debate. It has been argued that Pompey's personal ambition clarifies the Roman demonstration of power.⁵⁰ Although ambition will definitely have been a factor behind the decision to wage war, it is most likely that other factors were in play as well. Sherwin-White has made the suggestion that the Roman commander intended to "assert control over the rulers" in the Caucasus – a plausible idea, given the fact that these peoples were once part of Tigranes' Armenian empire and had as such granted military support to their overlord at Tigranocerta in 69 against Lucullus.⁵¹ By demonstrating his military supremacy, Pompey probably intended to bring them into Rome's sphere of influence. Sherwin-White explains that Roman (indirect) control over the region would prevent a Parthian take-over of Tigranes' former possessions.⁵² However, since there is no evidence whatsoever to conclude that the Parthians were set on extending their hegemony beyond the Caucasus, this suggestion remains speculative.

Following the conclusion of peace with some of the tribes in the Caucasus in 65, Pompey moved southwards into Pontus and allegedly received an embassy from the Parthian ruler Phraates "requesting to renew the treaty with him".⁵³ Dio informs us that the king was startled at Pompey's success and the subjugation of Armenia and parts of Pontus. The advance "across the Euphrates as far as the Tigris" by A. Gabinius, one of Pompey's legates who was to become proconsul of Syria in 57, would have upset him as well.⁵⁴ What treaty Phraates wished to have renewed exactly is not clarified by Dio, but the historian is most likely to have referred to a *foedus* that Pompey himself would have concluded with the Parthians at some earlier point. This may seem odd, but we will see that in the light of

⁵⁰ Magie (1950) 359.

⁵¹ Plutarch, *Luc.* 26.4.

⁵² Sherwin-White (1984) 195.

⁵³ Dio, 37.5.2: "ἀνανεώσασθαι τὰς συνθήκας ἐθέλων".

⁵⁴ Dio, 37.5.2: "ὕπερ τὸν Εὐφράτην μέχρι τοῦ Τίγριδος".

changed circumstances the request for this renewal is actually understandable. Although our only two sources for that earlier treaty, Florus and Orosius, do not provide us with any indications regarding the date of this earlier agreement, it is not implausible to surmise that the pact was settled in 66 prior to the attack upon Mithridates. Dio dates the creation of friendship between Pompey and Phraates to this moment.⁵⁵ It is very well possible that the realisation of these friendly relations was the result of the conclusion of that earlier treaty. Unfortunately, only marginal details about this pact are given by Florus and Orosius. Both authors place their reference to this pact in the context of Crassus' launch of his Parthian expedition in 54. Florus describes how Crassus crossed the Euphrates at Zeugma and was approached by ambassadors from king Orodes II at Nicephorium, who had brought the message "bidding him to remember the treaties made with Pompey and Sulla".⁵⁶ Orosius recounts a similar episode, claiming that a certain legate dispatched by the king came near to Crassus and accused him of having violated the treaty of Lucullus and Pompey by traversing the Euphrates.⁵⁷ Some scholars have concluded on the basis of these sources that the treaty struck by Pompey with the Parthians arranged for the Euphrates as boundary between the Roman and Parthian spheres of influence.⁵⁸ However, Sherwin-White has accurately pointed out that the question of the Euphrates as frontier can only have arisen after Tigranes had been forced to give up his claims on the territories in Sophene and Mesopotamia. This only happened later in 66, whereas the treaty that Phraates requested to be renewed in 65 may already have been struck in the beginning of 66 prior to the outbreak of hostilities between Pompey and

⁵⁵ Dio, 36.45.3. Cf. Livy, *Per.* 100, who even says that Pompey renewed the *amicitia* with Phraates. Both passages do not necessarily refer to two different events. On the contrary, it is very likely that Dio drew upon Livy's account at this point. If Livy's epitomiser is to be believed, book 100 dealt among other things with the transfer of the command in the Third Mithridatic war upon Pompey and the conflict between Tigranes the Younger and his father. Since both events can be safely dated to 66, the renewal of friendship with Phraates probably occurred in the same year.

⁵⁶ Florus, 1.46.4: "... *percussorum cum Pompeio foederum Sullae meminisset*".

⁵⁷ Orosius, 6.13.2.

⁵⁸ Dobiaś (1931) 235; Ziegler (1964) 28.

Mithridates. Sherwin-White believes that the original agreement with Phraates had arranged for the redistribution of Tigranes' possessions in Mesopotamia and Adiabene to Parthia.⁵⁹ When Gabinius had made his march as far as the Tigris (i.e. through Mesopotamia), probably at some point in 65, Phraates was surprised and thus sent a deputation to Pompey after his return from the Caucasus to confirm the agreement that was made earlier on.⁶⁰ Pompey did not reply to the king's request and instead sent his legate Afranius to take away Gordyene from him and give it to Tigranes – a move that successfully played Phraates and Tigranes against each other. The legate succeeded in his mission at some point later in 65 and then returned through Mesopotamia to Syria where he arrived in 64.⁶¹ It was only after this event that Phraates can logically have demanded the Euphrates to be recognised as frontier between Rome and Parthia.

1.3 Amisus and the friendship with Antiochus of Commagene

The request made by king Phraates in 65 to have the earlier treaty made by Pompey renewed was thus rejected. During the remainder of the year and the following winter, the Roman commander stayed in Pontus. What business he precisely transacted in Mithridates' former kingdom and in other areas during the following year and a half until the armed conflict in Judaea in 63 remains unfortunately unclear as a result of the absence of a continuous narrative in our sources for this period.⁶² It is nevertheless beyond doubt that he spent the winter and most of 64 suppressing the last vestiges of resistance in Pontus that were centred in certain strongholds.⁶³ With the kingdom pacified, Pompey moved to the

⁵⁹ Sherwin-White (1984) 221-223.

⁶⁰ Dio, 37.5.2.

⁶¹ Dio, 37.5.3-5; Plutarch, *Pomp.* 36.2. See map 1 for clarification.

⁶² As pointed out by Sherwin-White (1984) 206.

⁶³ Plutarch, *Pomp.* 36.6-37.3; Dio, 37.7.5; Strabo, 12.3.38; Appian, *Mith.* 107. See also Sherwin-White (1984) 206-208, who provides a critical analysis of the Pompey's activities in 64.

city of Amisus on the Black Sea coast, and engaged in regulating Rome's provinces. Plutarch informs us that he also distributed gifts and received many kings, dynasts and other leaders.⁶⁴ Details about the decisions that he made there have unfortunately not been transmitted to us; nor is it clear what the identities of those rulers were and what had motivated them to come and see Pompey. Possibly, they anticipated to obtain some benefits from him with the war in Pontus and – earlier on already – in Armenia having come to a conclusion. Mithridates and Tigranes had expanded their respective kingdoms substantially prior to the struggle with Lucullus in the 70s BC at the cost of other rulers. Now that Pompey's successes had undone most of those gains in the course of 64, a suitable moment had arisen for those dynasts or their successors to meet Pompey and demand the return of territories of which they had been deprived on earlier occasions. Whether the kings and dynasts to which Plutarch refers had actually come to meet Pompey with those intentions can obviously not be said on the basis of our source material.

Yet, whatever the exact nature of the exchanges at Amisus was, Pompey eventually left Pontus with his army and advanced southwards to Commagene.⁶⁵ Appian explains in his *Mithridatic Wars* that at arrival there he launched a war against the Commagenian king Antiochus I. Specifics about this alleged encounter are not provided. The hostilities are said to have ended when the king concluded friendship with Pompey.⁶⁶ Positive as Appian is about this armed aggression,

⁶⁴ Plutarch, *Pomp.* 38.1-2; Livy, *Per.* 102. Cf. Dio, 37.7a, who does not explicitly mention a meeting at Amisus, but does refer to Pompey dealing with the business of those kings and dynasts who had come to see him.

⁶⁵ See maps 1 and 5 for clarification.

⁶⁶ Appian, *Mith.* 106. Inscriptions from Commagene in which Antiochus is styled φιλορώμαιος (OGIS 383-397, 401-402, 404) cannot be seen as evidence for the official recognition of the king as friend of the Roman people (*amicus populi Romani*). Facella (2010) 186-187 has pointed to a stele discovered at Sofraz Köy – and published by Wagner / Petzl (1976) – which on the front consists of a relief depicting the king and Apollo, and on the back features an inscription referring to Antiochus as φιλορώμαιος. The text has fairly convincingly been dated to the early years of Antiochus' reign (r.69-38) before Pompey's intervention in 64 on the grounds that in the first place the epithet μέγας – so prolific in inscriptions after 64 – is absent and in the second place Antiochus

though, scholars rightly cast doubt on the occurrence of the military clash.⁶⁷ Not only is Antiochus not known to have served as a supporter of Mithridates or Tigranes in the recent wars with Rome, Appian informs us a bit further in his account that Pompey granted the city of Seleucia on the Euphrates (also known as Zeugma) and some unidentified land in Mesopotamia to the Commagenian king – a claim that has been corroborated by Strabo.⁶⁸ Zeugma was located by a bridge over the river which gave access to the Parthian kingdom and was as such strategically highly important. That Pompey added this city to the Commagenian realm thus demonstrates how much trust he had in the king. Had Antiochus offered resistance, then Pompey would probably not have retained him in his position and conferred upon him such a vital piece of territory. A war against the Commagenian king did thus in all likelihood not take place. As Sherwin-White suggests, Appian may have been deceived by the alleged appearance of Antiochus' name on a plaque that was carried in the triumphal parade of 61 and contained, among other things, the names of rulers reputedly conquered by Pompey.⁶⁹ Although the accuracy of the preserved version of the text on the plaque is uncertain in view of the fact that only Appian himself has transmitted a copy to us, the presence of Antiochus' name on the tablet does by itself not prove

is styled “the first adopting the tiara” (“πρῶτος ἀναλαβὼν τὴν κίταριν”), by which is probably meant the Armenian tiara of king Tigranes II as visualised by reliefs, statues and the imageries on coinage (for references see Facella l.c.). Since the mid-80s BC, Commagene had belonged to the Armenian sphere of influence. Lucullus' invasion of Armenia in 69 ended this dependency. The reference to the Armenian tiara probably appeared soon afterwards as a means to portray Antiochus as the legitimate successor of the Armenian king in Commagene. The epigraphic evidence to Antiochus as πρῶτος ἀναλαβὼν τὴν κίταριν is limited to the inscription under discussion here. Later texts do not make this connection any more; obviously after Antiochus had been recognised as king by Rome, it was no longer essential to make an association with the Armenian past. The inscription at Sofraz Köy can thus fairly safely be dated before Pompey's intervention in 64. This means that Antiochus was already called “a friend of Rome” (φιλορῶμαιος) before being officially given that title by the Senate in 59 when Pompey's *acta* were ratified. As argued by Facella l.c., the appearance of the term φιλορῶμαιος in inscriptions does not necessarily reflect the conferment of the official title *amicus populi Romani* by Rome.

⁶⁷ Sullivan (1977c) 764; Sherwin-White (1984) 208; Facella (2006) 230-231.

⁶⁸ Appian, *Mith.* 114; Strabo, 16.2.3.

⁶⁹ Sherwin-White (1984) 208. The text of the supposed inscription carrying Antiochus' name is given by Appian, *Mith.* 117.

that a military victory over Commagene had in fact occurred.⁷⁰ As Facella points out, nothing would have withheld Pompey from listing the Commagenian king among the rulers that he had conquered (ἐνικήθησαν) just to give the impression that Antiochus was defeated in battle.⁷¹ That Pompey deliberately strove to represent his dealings with Antiochus as a military victory is illustrated by the alleged inclusion of Commagenian hostages in the triumphal procession among distinguished hostages from Iberia and Albania, and eminent prisoners from other nations.⁷² The audience will not have been able to regard the Commagenians

⁷⁰ Cf. Östenberg (2009) 165, who calls the accuracy of Appian's version of the text on the tablet carried in the procession into doubt based on the inclusion of Antiochus' name on the one hand and the absence of Commagene in any "official list of the eastern nations over which Pompey held his triumph" on the other hand. None of these so-called official lists to which Östenberg refers (Plutarch, *Pomp.* 45.2; Pliny, *HN* 7.26.98; Diodorus, 40.4), though, make it necessary to reject Appian's version of the tablet. Neither Pliny the Elder nor Diodorus claim to give the text on the plaques carried in the triumphal procession. The former merely claims that he provides the official announcement (*praefatio*) of the parade, whereas the latter purports to have given the text of a dedicatory inscription mentioning Pompey's achievements. Only Plutarch informs us of the content of the plaques taken along in the procession, and asserts that they contained the names of the names of the nations which Pompey led in a triumph. That Commagene is not mentioned in the list that Plutarch provide, however, does not mean that Antiochus was not included in the inscription to which Appian refers. There is no reason to assume that the inscriptions carried in the triumphal procession all contained the same text.

⁷¹ Facella (2006) 231.

⁷² Plutarch, *Pomp.* 45.4 informs us of the participation of the Commagenian, Iberian and Albanian hostages, as well as the prominent prisoners in the procession. That the hostages and prisoners would have been led in the parade alongside one another is explained by Appian, *Mith.* 117, who himself reveals that three Iberian and two Albanian chiefs participated in the procession, but does not make any mention of Commagenian hostages. Florus, 1.40.28 and Dio, 37.2.5-7 clarify that the Iberian king Artoces had placed his children as hostages at Pompey's disposal. The nature of the Albanian and Commagenian hostages staged in the procession is unknown to us. It is not unthinkable, though, that they equally consisted of members of the ruling elite. Yet, from whatever group within the society these hostages were recruited, it is important to realise that hostages were not only demanded of Rome in the event of the capitulation (*deditio*) of a foreign people, such as in the case of the Iberians and the Albanians. There is ample evidence, compiled and analysed by Elbern (1990) 98-103, 137-140, revealing that hostages were also given to Rome in the case of the conclusion of treaties or other interstate arrangements (such as truces). The hostages served as a bail to force the foreign party to adhere to the agreement. Accordingly, the presence of hostages from Commagene does not show that Commagene had been defeated militarily by Pompey. It may very well be that Pompey had demanded hostages of Antiochus to secure his loyalty and maintain the friendship. The conclusion of Elbern (1990) 140 – followed by Östenberg (2009) 165 – believes that the Commagenian hostages were given in the case of the conclusion of a *foedus iniqua* (an unequal treaty). There is, however, no evidence for a treaty by Pompey with the Commagenians.

carried along in the parade as others than prisoners.⁷³ The mentioning of Antiochus' name on the plaque of conquered rulers, thus, does not corroborate that the Commagenian ruler was defeated by Pompey in battle. As we saw, armed hostilities have in all likelihood not taken place. With the bestowal of strategically vital pieces of land to Antiochus, Pompey could save Roman manpower that would have been necessary in the case of adding this territory to a Roman province (which at that moment did not yet exist in the Near East).⁷⁴

King Antiochus was not the only ruler recognised as a friend of Rome. We have already seen that Pompey had established friendship with the Parthian king Phraates in 66 and that in the same year the Armenian ruler Tigranes was enrolled "among the friend and allies of Rome".⁷⁵ The practice to create these types of connections with kings, princes, notables and indeed communities in the eastern Mediterranean became part of Rome's diplomatic dealings as early as late in the third century. At first, the creation of such relationships occurred sporadically, but from 200 onwards, Rome embraced this activity on a more frequent basis.⁷⁶ Some of the rulers who are attested to have maintained political dealings with Rome in the period of civil war from 44 until 31 appear to have upheld such associations at some point during their reign. With the formation of friendships being so widespread, the question arises what the consequences were of these kinds of compacts for the bilateral transactions between Rome and each of the parties involved. Did the conclusion of a mere friendship impose certain obligations on either or both of the partners? Or were such obligations only in place in the case of a concomitantly concluded alliance? For the benefit of a comprehensive analysis of

⁷³ Östenberg (2009) 166-167. Cf. Beard (2007), who does not deal with the hostages staged in a procession in her book on the Roman triumph.

⁷⁴ Facella (2006) 234-236.

⁷⁵ See above.

⁷⁶ Gruen (1984) 68-69; 76; 84; 88; 95. Friendship was for example expressed with Perseus of Macedonia in 179 (Polybius, 25.3.1; Diodorus, 29.30) and with Ariarathes V of Cappadocia in 163 (Polybius, 31.3.1; 31.8.8).

the political relations between Rome and the Near Eastern kingdoms and principalities during our civil war, a brief elaboration on these issues is important.

1.4 *Amicitia and Societas*

Despite the abundant amount of evidence for relationships of friendship between Rome and foreign rulers, a clear vision on the juridical status of such interstate *amicitia*-connections cannot be extracted from the source material. It is therefore peculiar that until recently scholarly debate on this issue was settled ever since Alfred Heuss had claimed in 1933 that relationships of *amicitia* between Rome and foreign powers were made independently from the enactment of a formal treaty, “durch jede Art friedlichen, zwischenstaatlichen Verkehrs...”.⁷⁷ He rejected the view – mainly adhered to by Mommsen and Täubler – according to which relationships of *amicitia* between Rome and foreign powers were founded on formal enduring treaties of friendship.⁷⁸ A majority of scholars embraced Heuss’ views and proposed that *amicitia* between Rome and a foreign king, dynast or other ruler “represented an informal and extra-legal relationship not requiring a treaty, a pact, or any official engagements”.⁷⁹ Yet, lately, the German historian Andreas Zack published a study in which he challenges this view, claiming that there is no evidence to prove that informal *amicitia*-relationships were a regular feature of Rome’s foreign policy from the third century BC onwards. In addition, he asserts that those instances of interstate *amicitia* of which the foundation act has

⁷⁷ Heuss (1933) 46.

⁷⁸ Heuss (1933) 12-25, 53-59; cf. Mommsen (1887) 590-591; Täubler (1913) 1-3; 47-58: Mommsen and Täubler assert that a so-called enduring ‘Freundschaftsvertrag’ between Rome and a foreign people created “ein dauerndes internationales Rechtsverhältniss” (Mommsen, o.c. 591) for both scholars claimed that natural hostility existed between Rome and a foreign people in a situation where no treaties between the two parties had been concluded.

⁷⁹ Gruen (1984) 55 (quotation). Similar views by Ziegler (1972) 83; Coşkun (2008c) and Kaizer / Facella (2010b) 22.

been attested in the extant source material, can be traced back to a *foedus* (treaty).⁸⁰ Several examples of *amicitia*-connections, which found their origin in a treaty, have been provided by Zack. For practical reasons, only one of his cases will be briefly discussed in this section: Rome's friendship with Syphax,⁸¹ a tribal leader of the Numidian Masaesylii during the Second Punic War.

The two Roman military commanders, P. and Cn. Cornelius Scipio, sent an embassy to Syphax in 213, in order to conclude friendship and an alliance ("*amicitiam societatemque*") with him and to make a promise that Rome would repay Syphax, if he were to continue his resistance against Carthage.⁸² Rome left one of the three ambassadors in Numidia to train the troops and prepare them for infantry battles, in which they were inexperienced, according to Livy.⁸³ In exchange for this support, Syphax sent three Numidian legates to Spain, instructing them to persuade Numidian troops there to desert the auxiliary forces of Carthage.⁸⁴ The military instructor as well as the legates sent to Spain succeeded in their tasks, since the army of Syphax defeated the Carthaginians in a battle, whereas many Numidians began to desert the Carthaginian cause in Spain.⁸⁵

Livy informs us that these diplomatic dealings marked the beginning of *amicitia* between Rome and Syphax.⁸⁶ Obviously, the basis of those diplomatic and political interactions was laid by the agreement which the three Roman ambassadors and Syphax made in 213. In a different passage, Livy clearly refers to this agreement as a *foedus*.⁸⁷ Yet, the existence of such a treaty has been rejected by Heuss, who argues that a *foedus* could only be sanctioned by the Senate and the people in Rome and not merely by a magistrate. Since such an authorisation is not

⁸⁰ Zack (2001) 240 (conclusion), 167-242.

⁸¹ Livy, 24.48.1-24.49.6; Zack (2001) 185-187.

⁸² Livy, 24.48.1-3.

⁸³ Livy, 24.48.5-12.

⁸⁴ Livy, 24.48.9-10.

⁸⁵ Livy, 24.48.12-13.

⁸⁶ Livy, 24.48.13: "Thus began the friendship of the Romans with Syphax" ("*Ita cum Syphace Romanis coepta amicitia est*").

⁸⁷ Livy, 24.49.3.

attested in the sources, he concludes that a *foedus* could not have been established between Rome and Syphax 213.⁸⁸ Zack argues convincingly against this view, asserting that a Roman magistrate was capable of making treaties with a foreign king or people himself. The treaty could become valid by the regular ratification of a promagistrate's actions by the Senate.⁸⁹ It is therefore plausible that the agreement between the three ambassadors of P. and Cn. Cornelius and Syphax had the status of an official *foedus*. Provided that Livy's terminology is accurate, we may propose, alongside Zack, that the *amicitia* between Rome and Syphax was the result of this *foedus*.⁹⁰

The conclusion that the origin of the *amicitia*-connection between Rome and Syphax can be traced back to a treaty between these two powers, is used by Zack, along with several similar instances, to demonstrate that *amicitia*-relationships, which did not find their origin in a treaty, were no regular feature of Rome's foreign policy.⁹¹ Although the example of the *amicitia* between Rome and Syphax does show that relationships of friendship were able to originate in a *foedus*, there is no proof that other events or circumstances could not also initiate such connections. Several scholars, who regard interstate *amicitia* as an informal relationship, asserted that any kind of diplomatic intercourse, a friendly exchange, a military alliance with or without a treaty or a peace agreement could lay the foundation for a relationship of *amicitia*.⁹² The peace treaty between Rome and Antiochus III in 188 can, for example, be used as evidence for the informal nature of *amicitia*-connections. Both the Greek and the Latin versions of the treaty illustrate that *φιλία* (*amicitia*) and *συμμαχία* (*societas*) were established between

⁸⁸ Zack (2001) 185-187; cf. Heuss (1933) 29-30; Dahlheim (1968) 229-230 only mentions the making of *amicitia*.

⁸⁹ Zack (2001) 190-214.

⁹⁰ Zack (2001) 187.

⁹¹ Zack (2001) 184-189. The only examples mentioned by Zack (2001) of possible *amicitia*-relationships, which did not find their origin in a treaty, were Rome's friendship with Rhodes until 167 BC (Zack o.c. 214-222) and the *amicitia* with five Sicilian cities (Zack o.c. 222-231). However, he adds to this that the evidence for these informal *amicitia*-relationships is problematic.

⁹² Dahlheim (1968) 137; Ziegler (1972) 87; Gruen (1984) 55; 68.

these two parties on the conditions mentioned in the treaty.⁹³ This could suggest that not the treaty itself, but the terms mentioned in the treaty enacted *amicitia* between both parties. In other words, not the form of enactment (*foedus*), but the content of the stipulations seems to have established the relationship of *amicitia* between Antiochus III and Rome.⁹⁴ Whether a similar explanation can be applied to other instances of interstate *amicitia* is uncertain, since the foundation acts of most interstate *amicitiae* have not been preserved in the sources. Other factors that might have played a role, according to some scholars, in the establishment of *amicitia*, such as mere friendly exchanges or any kind of diplomatic intercourse, have not been attested in the sources.⁹⁵

Therefore, it is not possible to conclude that all relationships of interstate *amicitia* were made in an informal way, independent of the establishment of a formal treaty.⁹⁶ Nor can we state that *amicitia* by its nature denoted a relationship, of which the foundation was laid by the acceptance of a formal treaty. Although the evidence has shown that those instances of interstate *amicitia* of which the foundation act has been preserved in the sources can be traced back to a treaty, the two versions of the peace treaty between Rome and Antiochus III have shown, however, that tracing back the origin of an *amicitia*-connection to a *foedus* does not necessarily mean that such a treaty established this relationship. It is equally likely that the specific terms, included into the clauses of the treaty, resulted in interstate *amicitia*. Yet, whether a similar explanation can be applied to other instances of

⁹³ Polybius, 21.42; Livy, 38.38.1-18.

⁹⁴ On this argument, see also Dahlheim (1968) 147.

⁹⁵ These factors have been mentioned by Dahlheim (1968) 137; Ziegler (1972) 87; Gruen (1984) 55; 68.

⁹⁶ See also Pomponius' explanation of circumstances under which the *ius Postliminii* was applied in peace time (*Dig.* 49.15.5.2): "*Postliminium* is also granted in peace time; for if we have neither friendship nor *hospitium* with a particular people, nor a treaty made for the purpose of friendship, they are not precisely enemies..." (transl. Watson) ("*in pace quoque postliminium datum est: nam si cum gente aliqua neque amicitiam neque hospitium neque foedus amicitiae causa factum habemus, hi hostes quidem non sunt*"). Heuss (1933) 12-13 has argued on the basis of this passage that the existence of *amicitia* did not necessarily depend on the conclusion of a treaty. Cimma (1976) has proposed with regards to this same passage that a so-called friendship-treaty did exist and that this passage cannot be used to show that *amicitia* was not necessarily dependent on the existence of a treaty.

amicitia is uncertain, since the foundation acts of most relationships of *amicitia* have not been preserved in the sources. It is therefore not possible to state if the existence of interstate *amicitia*-connections depended on the establishment of a formal treaty, or if other factors played a role in the foundation of these relationships. Perhaps, both formally enacted *foedera* and informally constructed relationships of friendship between Rome and foreign kings or peoples did occur.

Since the juridical status of interstate *amicitia*-relationships is not clear, a definite answer to the question whether *amicitia* was a relationship which imposed mutual obligations on the two parties, cannot be given. Not only do the extant literary accounts and epigraphic documents fail to reveal whether *amicitia* entailed any obligations. These sources also use the expressions *amicitia* (φιλία), *societas* (συμμαχία) and *amicitia et societas* alternately.⁹⁷ Dahlheim argues that these terms are often used as synonyms.⁹⁸ We should agree with Dahlheim that this inconsistent use does not necessarily reflect a lack of knowledge on the part of the two main authorities for Republican history, Polybius and Livy. In the time when *amicitia* was introduced as a diplomatic tool of Rome in the fourth century (not necessarily with regard to kingdoms, principalities and city-states in the eastern Mediterranean), many of its *amici* were also military allies (*socii*). In this way, the two terms became gradually assimilated.⁹⁹ That Tigranes was enrolled among the friends and allies of Rome by Pompey does thus not necessarily mean that a treaty had been concluded with the Armenian king and that he was bound to support Rome in war. Nor does the application of any of these terms to any of the Near Eastern kings mean that certain obligations had been imposed upon them by Rome.

⁹⁷ Dahlheim (1968) 163-166; Ziegler (1972) 88; Zack (2001) 171, 181. See also Sands (1907) 12-40 on the terminology of the sources for referring to friendship, alliances and treaties.

⁹⁸ E.g. Livy, 42.6.6-12; Dahlheim (1968) 164.

⁹⁹ Dahlheim (1968) 169, 265-269; Coşkun (2008b) 12.

1.5 The war against Darius the Mede and the dissolution of the Seleucid Kingdom

It must have been sometime in the autumn of 64 when Pompey intervened in Commagene. Around the same time, the Roman commander is said by Appian to have fought a war against a certain Darius the Mede (who is probably to be identified as the ruler of Media Atropatene) on the grounds that he had either supported king Antiochus or Tigranes.¹⁰⁰ Median assistance for the Armenian ruler in 69 during the war against Lucullus is confirmed by Plutarch.¹⁰¹ That this alliance with Rome's enemy would have prompted Pompey to undertake a punitive expedition against Darius is not unthinkable. Velleius also refers to an invasion of Media, and Appian has Darius' name mentioned in his version of Pompey's triumphal inscription that gives a list of rulers whom he had conquered and was carried in the procession.¹⁰² Unlike Appian, though, Velleius associates the aggression against Media Atropatene with the wars in the Caucasus and does not place it after Pompey's dealings with Commagene. That the encounter occurred in 65 following the Caucasian campaign is much more plausible than for the struggle against Darius to have taken place – as Appian suggests – in 64 when Pompey was on his way to Syria. Media Atropatene was located just south of the Caucasus, and it would be most logical for Pompey to have initiated his armed confrontation when he was engaged in that region, all the more so since Plutarch refers to some diplomatic exchanges between Pompey and Media Atropatene when the wars against the Albanians and Iberians were in progress.¹⁰³

Yet, whenever the war against Darius the Mede was fought, and whatever the outcome of the struggle, Pompey arrived in Syria towards the end of 64 and dealt with the request of the Seleucid prince Antiochus XIII Philadelphus (also

¹⁰⁰ Appian, *Mith.* 106. For the location of Media Atropatene, see map 1 and 2.

¹⁰¹ Plutarch, *Luc.* 26.4.

¹⁰² Velleius, 2.40.1; Appian, *Mith.* 117.

¹⁰³ Plutarch, *Pomp.* 36.2. Similar view by Sherwin-White (1984) 209.

known as “Asiaticus”),¹⁰⁴ a son of Antiochus X Eusebes (r. c.95-92?/88?), to be reinstalled as king over Syria and Cilicia.¹⁰⁵ Already in 69, Antiochus had ascended to the throne by establishing himself as king in Antioch following the Armenian evacuation of Syria,¹⁰⁶ thereby ending a hiatus in Seleucid rule of almost fifteen years.¹⁰⁷ The monarch received approval for this move from the Antiochenes and soon afterwards also secured recognition for his acquisition of the kingship over Syria from Lucullus.¹⁰⁸ With this moral backing, Antiochus was able to maintain a position of authority over Antioch and the surrounding region for about a year and a half. Eventually, a defeat on the battlefield in 67 at the hands of opponents whose identities have not been revealed to us marked the beginning of his downfall.¹⁰⁹ In the aftermath of this military setback Antiochus faced a revolt

¹⁰⁴ Appian, *Syr.* 70 explains that the epithet “Asiaticus” derived from Antiochus’ place of upbringing being Asia. On his own silver tetradrachms struck at Antioch, he is styled “βασιλέως Ἀντίοχον φιλάδελφον” – on which see Newell, *SMA* 126-127 nos.460-461; Houghton / Lorber / Hoover (2008) 619 no.2487. Cf. Babelon (1890) 201-202 no.1538, who attributed the coin to Antiochus XI Philadelphus (r. c.94/93). On stylistic and material grounds, Newell l.c. has assigned these coins to Antiochus XIII.

¹⁰⁵ Appian, *Mith.* 106; Justin, *Epit.* 40.2.3; Malalas, 212; Dio, 37.7a.

¹⁰⁶ Appian, *Syr.* 49.

¹⁰⁷ The Seleucid rule came to an end in 83 when Philip I Philadelphus, son of Antiochus VIII Grypus, was expelled from Antioch by Tigranes (cf. Appian, *Syr.* 48 and *Mith.* 105, who erroneously believes that it was Antiochus Pius (X) who was ejected). In the preceding twelve years the offspring of Antiochus VIII and his cousin Antiochus IX Cyzicenus, who died in 96 and 95 respectively, had been engaged in almost incessant warfare against one another. The internal feuds weakened the Seleucid kingdom enormously and made it vulnerable for external attacks. The coup de grâce came 84/83 when Antiochus XII Dionysus perished in a battle against the Nabataeans near Cana (Josephus, *AJ* 13.387-392). For Philip I it was difficult to maintain his position in the north of Syria, and Tigranes’ advancement eventually forced him to seek refuge in the sanctuary of Zeus at Olba in Cilicia. For more details about these conflicts in the Seleucid Kingdom from 95 until 83, see now Ehling (2008) 231-250 with references. Although contradictory indications provided by literary sources and numismatic evidence render it impossible to establish the exact course of all the events with certainty, newly discovered coins seem to resolve some dating issues – for which see Houghton / Lorber / Hoover (2008) 551-612 – and thus render the older studies with regard to the period 95-83 by Bevan (1902) 259-263; Bellinger (1949) 72-80 and Will (1967) 382-385 partly obsolete.

¹⁰⁸ Justin, *Epit.* 40.2.2. Cf. Appian, *Syr.* 49, who merely says that Lucullus did not bear a grudge (ἐφθόνησεν) against Antiochus’ rule over his ancestral kingdom.

¹⁰⁹ Diodorus, 40.1a. Ehling (2008) 261 argues that Antiochus was defeated by the Arabs whom Tigranes II would have placed in the Amanus mountain range at some point during the heyday of his reign, which was before Lucullus’ invasion of Armenia (Plutarch, *Luc.* 21.4). The possibility of this suggestion cannot be excluded because of the vicinity of the Amanus to Antioch. Moreover, in

among Antioch's population whose agitators aimed for his expulsion. Although the king managed to quell the uprising, the leaders of the rebellion escaped to Cilicia and persuaded a homonymous son of the former king Philip I (r. c.95/94-83) to come to Syria and win the Seleucid throne for himself. The pretender thereupon secured the support of a so-called "Arab" leader named Azizus, and had a diadem placed on his head by him. The provenance of this Azizus, as well as the exact area of his rule, remains uncertain. Yet, wherever this Arab leader originated from, Antiochus XIII did not stand by and watch his realm slipping through his fingers. He was determined to maintain his position, and appealed to the Emisene ruler Sampsigeramus for assistance. Sampsigeramus, however, did not grant the aid for which the king had hoped. Diodorus informs us that the Emisene chief, in accordance with an arrangement made with Azizus to get rid of the two kings and to split the remnants of the Seleucid realm between them, had Antiochus arrested. Philip II managed to evade detention and eventually found himself on the throne at Antioch.¹¹⁰ For how long the new king retained his position in Syria remains unknown, but it is not unthinkable that the king lost his position in 65 as a result of an uprising at Antioch.¹¹¹ Who subsequently exerted control at Antioch and the wider area of the Tetrapolis remains unclear. It has been suggested that Antiochus XIII immediately returned to the throne before Pompey's arrival in Syria, but there is no evidence to support that view. In the end, though, Pompey rejected the

65 Pompey had dispatched to Syria one of his legates, L. Afranius, who is said (Plutarch, *Pomp.* 39.2) to have subjugated Arabs dwelling in the Amanus mountains. Surely, a campaign against this people would not have been necessary if they did not pose a potential threat to the security of the region. Yet, there is no certainty that these were the Arabs responsible for the defeat upon Antiochus. We shall see that a little later the so-called "Arab" leader Azizus and the Emisene ruler Sampsigeramus would make an attempt to eliminate the Seleucid claimants to the throne and to divide the remains of the Seleucid realm among themselves. It is not unthinkable that one of them had been responsible for a military victory over Antiochus, but had failed to expel him. Obviously, without any evidence, it remains to conjecture who defeated Antiochus.

¹¹⁰ Diodorus, 40.1a-b.

¹¹¹ Dio, 36.17.3.

requests of Antiochus XIII and turned Syria into a Roman province, the first one in the Near East.¹¹²

Several different explanations can be given for Pompey's decision to reject the claims of Antiochus and to establish the *provincia Syria*. The choice seems at first a deviation from the practice to retain native rulers.¹¹³ The most plausible explanation is given by Justin. This author claims that Pompey refused to reinstall Antiochus XIII as ruler because he had already lost the throne to Tigranes in the past and because Rome was victorious over the Armenian king. Justin implies that Pompey did not believe that Antiochus was able to defend his kingdom against the Judaeans and Arabs.¹¹⁴ That this fear was justified is shown by Antiochus' defeat in the war in 67 and by the observation that certain Arabs were ravaging the region.¹¹⁵ Pompey did not trust Antiochus to bring the stability that was needed. Probably for that reason, he refuted the claims by Antiochus and established a Roman province in Syria.

1.6 Pompey's dealings with the Emisenoi and his reorganisation of the Princedom of Chalcis

Having spent the entire winter in Antioch, Pompey moved in the spring of 63 southwards to Damascus. Along the way, he first seems to have dealt with the Emisenian φύλαρχος Sampsigeramus who had participated in the deposition of the Seleucid king Antiochus XIII in 67. Not much is known of his measures with regard to this ruler whose main base appears to have been the city of Arethusa situated in the north of Syria on the river Orontes.¹¹⁶ A coin from Arethusa

¹¹² Appian, *Syr.* 49; *Mith.* 106; Justin, *Epit.* 40.2.5; Plutarch, *Pomp.* 39.2; Dio, 37.7a; Malalas, 212.

¹¹³ Appian, *Syr.* 49; Plutarch, *Pomp.* 39.2; Dio, 37.7a.

¹¹⁴ Justin, *Epit.* 40.2.2-5.

¹¹⁵ Dio, 37.7a.

¹¹⁶ Strabo, 16.2.10. As Millar (1993) 302 has pointed out, there is no evidence for the city of Emesa to have existed at that point already.

mentioning the Roman emperor Diadumenian, who ruled briefly in AD 217-218, carries the date 280, meaning that the city adopted a new era in 64 or 63.¹¹⁷ Although the sources do not provide us with any indication for the event that prompted the adoption of this new era, the implementation of this new dating formula is in all likelihood related to benefits granted by Pompey at that time as part of his grand-scale reorganisation of the Near East. Yet, whatever the nature of such remunerations may have been, Sullivan has claimed that Pompey did not only confirm Sampsigeramus' rule, but also imposed taxation on the Emisenoi.¹¹⁸ The evidence on which he bases the existence of a tax is a letter by Cicero from the year 59 addressed to Atticus in which he criticises Pompey for supporting Caesar's proposal for the distribution of land in Campania.¹¹⁹ The move would have ended the levy of the *vectigal* (a tax on public land) in that region, and thus have led to a loss of revenue.¹²⁰ The possibility of this happening prompted Cicero to address Pompey directly – as if he were communicating with him rather than with Atticus – and to refer to him as Sampsigeramus in a metonymic manner:¹²¹

“Very well, my good Sampsigeramus, but what are you going to say now? That you have arranged a *vectigal* for us in the Anti-Lebanon Mountains, and taken away our *vectigal* in Campania? How are you going to make that sound convincing?”

The reference to Pompey as Sampsigeramus has induced Sullivan to believe that Pompey had imposed a *vectigal* on the realm ruled by the φύλαρχος of the Emisenoi. Although the possibility is not to be excluded – all the more since Sampsigeramus' dominion may have stretched as far south as the Anti-Lebanon

¹¹⁷ Seyrig (1950) 21.

¹¹⁸ Sullivan (1977a) 201-202.

¹¹⁹ For more details and references, see Shackleton Bailey (1965) 381.

¹²⁰ For more details on the *vectigal*, see among others Nicolet (1976) 79-86.

¹²¹ Cicero, *Att.* 2.16.2: “Nunc, vero, Sampsicerame, quid dices? Vectigal te nobis in monte Antilibano constituisse, agri Campani abstulisse? Quid? Hoc quem ad modum obtinebis?” (Shackleton Bailey transl. adapted).

Mountains – in view of its sarcastic undertone, the passage cannot serve as evidence for the imposition of a Roman tax on the Emisenoi.¹²²

The route to Damascus led Pompey through the Beqā' valley and the principality ruled by a certain Ptolemy based at the (unidentifiable) city of Chalcis. Josephus informs us that he “devastated the territory of Ptolemy, the son of Mennaesus”.¹²³ What tracts of land were shattered exactly cannot be gleaned from our sources. On the eve of Rome's intervention, though, Ptolemy's realm appears to have consisted of the Beqā' and the adjoining Lebanon mountain range. Some unknown fortresses on the Phoenician coast between Tripolis and Byblos, which Strabo claims robbers (κακοῦργοι) of Ituraean and Arabian descent occupied, may also have constituted a part of Ptolemy's dominion.¹²⁴ However, in 63 Pompey appears to have decided on the demolition of those maritime strongholds, possibly to make an end to the pillaging activities which stood as a potential threat to the newly installed province of Syria.¹²⁵ Pompey may have been dissatisfied with Ptolemy's efforts to suppress these marauding operations. He may even have accused Ptolemy of involvement in these raids and for that reason have resolved to prosecute him. Unfortunately, the precise details of the arraignments which Pompey purportedly intended to bring up against Ptolemy, have eluded us. Yet, whatever “the sins” (τῶν ἀμαρτημάτων) were for which Pompey allegedly intended to sentence Ptolemy, Josephus explains that Ptolemy paid one thousand talents to escape a penalty, which might have entailed dethronement or perhaps even execution.¹²⁶ Whether Pompey also imposed taxation on the Principedom of Chalcis, as Aliquot has claimed, is uncertain because of the lack of any indication

¹²² Moreover, Cicero also refers in other letters sarcastically to Pompey as Sampsigeramus: *Att.* 2.14.1, 2.17.1.

¹²³ Josephus, *AJ* 14.39: “τὴν Πτολεμαίου τοῦ Μενναίου χώραν κατεπόνησεν”.

¹²⁴ Strabo, 16.2.18.

¹²⁵ Strabo, 16.2.18.

¹²⁶ Josephus, *AJ* 14.39 says that Ptolemy's relative, Dionysius of Tripolis, was beheaded on Pompey's instigation. It is not unlikely that Ptolemy had to face a similar fate if he had not offered a bribe.

for this in the sources.¹²⁷ At any rate, Ptolemy managed to be confirmed in his position, and Pompey allowed him to carry the titles of τετράρχης and ἀρχιερέυς (High Priest), as the appearance of these ranks on the coinage of this prince illustrates.¹²⁸ The near experience of a possible dethronement or perhaps even an execution must have made Ptolemy aware that the future of his position was at least to a certain degree dependent upon Rome or its representative in the Near East. A good illustration of this new relationship is the use of a Pompeian era on some of Ptolemy's coin issues.

1.7 The reorganisation of Judaea

With business in the Princedom of Chalcis concluded, Pompey moved further southwards and eventually arrived at Damascus, where he dealt with the succession crisis that had erupted in Judaea following the death of queen Alexandra in 67 between her sons Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II.¹²⁹ The seeds of this conflict, however, had already been sown in 76 when Alexander Jannaeus, the father of the two brothers, passed away.¹³⁰ Just like his predecessor Aristobulus I (r. 104-103), this Alexander did not only serve as High Priest, but also carried the title of king.¹³¹ With his death, the royal title came to his widow Alexandra, who as a woman was not eligible for the High Priesthood. After her elevation to the kingship she appointed her elder son Hyrcanus as High Priest.¹³² The younger sibling Aristobulus did not agree with this choice and after their mother died in

¹²⁷ Aliquot (1999-2003) 214.

¹²⁸ Wroth (1899) 279-280; Seyrig (1950) 47-48; Kindler (1993) 286-287, nos.5, 7-9. Note that not all the coins that can be attributed to Ptolemy feature both titles.

¹²⁹ See stemma 1 in the appendix for clarification.

¹³⁰ Josephus, *AJ* 13.398; *BJ* 1.106.

¹³¹ Josephus, *AJ* 13.320-323 (Alexander's kingship). Coins refer to Alexander as High Priest and king in Aramaic and as king in Greek, on which see among others Schürer (1973) 604. Josephus, *AJ* 13.301 and *BJ* 1.75 refer to Aristobulus' transformation of Judaea into a kingdom. His coins style him as High Priest in Aramaic, on which see Schürer (1973) 603.

¹³² Josephus, *AJ* 13.405-408; *BJ* 1.107-109.

67, he immediately took up arms against his elder brother, who had inherited the royal title and carried it in addition to the High Priesthood that he had already possessed for nine years. Aristobulus was victorious and forced Hyrcanus to hand over his two positions to him.¹³³ With Hyrcanus willing to submit to Aristobulus, peace would have returned to Judaea, had not Antipater, the son of a homonymous στρατηγός of the Judaeian district of Idumaea under Alexander Jannaeus,¹³⁴ persuaded his friend (φίλος) Hyrcanus to rebel against his brother. Having secured the support of the Nabataean king Aretas III in exchange for the return of twelve cities in the Moab that Alexander Jannaeus had taken from the Nabataeans, the war with Aristobulus resumed. The pressure of the Nabataean armies forced Aristobulus to retreat to Jerusalem.¹³⁵ At that moment, the general M. Aemilius Scaurus arrived in Judaea – where he had been sent by Pompey – and was approached by envoys of the two brothers who both tried to win Scaurus' support. Scaurus decided in the end in favour of Aristobulus and ordered Aretas to cease the siege and return to his kingdom.¹³⁶ The matter was reopened, though, when Pompey arrived in the spring of 63 at Damascus, the city which his legates L. Lollius and Q. Caecilius Metellus Nepos had captured in 65 or 64 and which would henceforth remain under Roman rule.¹³⁷ The Roman commander received Aristobulus, Hyrcanus and a delegation of Judaeans who aimed for the abolition of royal power and wished to revert to the rule of a High Priest.¹³⁸ Pompey at first decided to defer a verdict until he would come back from his inspection to the Nabataeans, but eventually decided against this idea when Aristobulus began a rebellion.¹³⁹ Pompey returned to Judaea and eventually captured the enemy and

¹³³ Josephus, *AJ* 14.1, 4-7; *BJ* 1.119-122.

¹³⁴ For the location of Idumaea, see map 3.

¹³⁵ Josephus, *AJ* 14.8-21; *BJ* 1.123-127.

¹³⁶ Josephus, *AJ* 14.29-33; *BJ* 1.127-130.

¹³⁷ Josephus, *AJ* 14.29; *BJ* 1.127. On Lollius and Metellus, and their capture of Damascus in 65 or 64, see Broughton (1952) 148, 160, 164, 165 n.7.

¹³⁸ Josephus, *AJ* 14.34-38, 41-45; *BJ* 1.131-132. For more details on the delegation who wished to abolish royal power over Judaea, see Eckhardt (2010).

¹³⁹ Josephus, *AJ* 14.46-48.

occupied Jerusalem.¹⁴⁰ He then implemented a rigorous reorganisation of Judaea, whereby he strongly reduced the kingdom in size.¹⁴¹ Most of the territories that had been attached to Judaea under the reigns of Hyrcanus I and Alexander Jannaeus were taken away from it. All the coastal cities from Dora in the north to Raphia in the south were removed from Judaeian rule. The same applied to the western part of Idumaea, the city of Samaria and the cities east of the Jordan, the latter of which came to be known collectively as the Decapolis, and would adopt an era going back to this event (64/63).¹⁴² All these areas were now placed under direct Roman rule and attached to the province of Syria. Pompey may also have taken the Plain of Esdraelon from Judaea.¹⁴³ Hyrcanus was reinstalled as High Priest in Jerusalem,¹⁴⁴ and he was granted “the leadership of the nation”, but without the royal title.¹⁴⁵ The realm granted to him consisted now only of the districts of Judaea proper, Samaria, Galilee and eastern Idumaea. In addition, Judaea was forced to pay tribute, the exact details of which elude us.¹⁴⁶

The reasons for this harsh treatment inflicted on Judaea have not been transmitted to us. Yet, it is very much thinkable that Pompey was induced by the internal friction that had disturbed Judaea ever since the death of Alexandra in 67. In order to ensure stability, he had Hyrcanus reinstalled as High Priest and taken

¹⁴⁰ Josephus, *AJ* 14.48-73; *BJ* 1.133-153. For more details on the war against Aristobulus, see among others Smallwood (1976) 23-27.

¹⁴¹ See map 3 for clarification.

¹⁴² For more details on the geographical extent and status of the Decapolis after its annexation by Pompey and incorporation into the province of Syria, see among others Bietenhard (1977) 231-238; Millar (1993) 38-39; Lichtenberger (2003) 14.

¹⁴³ The annexation of the Plain of Esdraelon is not attested in the sources as such. However, its return to Judaeian rule in 44 is testified by Josephus, *AJ* 14.207-212.

¹⁴⁴ Josephus, *AJ* 14.73; *BJ* 1.153.

¹⁴⁵ Josephus, *AJ* 20.244: “τοῦ ἔθνους προσηγορίαν”. That Hyrcanus was not given the kingship is based on the same section in Josephus’ *AJ* in which it is said that Pompey “withheld the diadem” from Hyrcanus (“διάδημα δὲ φορεῖν ἐκώλυσεν”). Smallwood (1976) 27 claims that aside from being appointed as High Priest, Hyrcanus was made ἐθνάρχης. Although Josephus’ reference to the προσηγορία over the Judaeian nation would suggest that Hyrcanus was given the title of ἐθνάρχης (which literally means “leader of a nation”), there is no firm evidence at all that this title was actually conferred upon him at this point. It remains thus unclear whether Pompey installed Hyrcanus as ἐθνάρχης in Judaea.

¹⁴⁶ Josephus, *AJ* 14.75-76; *BJ* 1.155-156. See also Smallwood (1976) 27-29.

his brother Aristobulus as prisoner to Rome. The territorial deprivations and the withdrawal of the royal title may have been measures designed to increase Hyrcanus' loyalty to Rome. In the hope to see these territories and the royal title restored, Hyrcanus would have shown allegiance to Rome.

Conclusion

Having implemented his reorganisation of Judaea, Pompey left M. Aemilius Scaurus *proquaestore propraetore* behind as the first governor of Syria, and returned himself to Asia Minor and eventually to Rome where he celebrated his triumph in 61.¹⁴⁷ In 59, his reorganisation of the Near East was confirmed by the Senate.¹⁴⁸ Pompey's actions in the East after the passing of the *lex Manilia* began as a war against Mithridates and his allies, but ended in a complete rearrangement of the political map of the Near East. The rationale behind the enterprise is difficult to gauge, but it seems as if Pompey was motivated to bring stabilisation to a region that had been torn apart by political turmoil with the steady disintegration of the Seleucid Kingdom from the turn of the century onwards. In order to implement a balance of power in the Near East, Pompey confirmed most rulers in their position. In some cases, though (such as with regard to Judaea), internal problems forced him to take more rigorous measures and apply regime change and territorial reductions. There does not seem to have been any incentive to place the Levant entirely under direct Roman rule. Only in Syria was a Roman province installed, because the Seleucid claimant to the throne had proven to be weak and unsuitable to rule. Yet, this abstention from installing Roman provinces did not mean that Rome had no control over the Near East. On the contrary, the relations

¹⁴⁷ Velleius, 2.40.3; Pliny, *HN* 7.26.98, 37.5.11-7.18; Josephus, *AJ* 14.79; *BJ* 1.157; Plutarch, *Pomp.* 42.1-45.5; Appian, *Syr.* 51; *Mith.* 116-117; *BCiv.* 5.10; Dio, 37.20.6-21.2; Eutropius, 6.16; Degraffi (1947) 84-85 = (1954) 108; Broughton (1952) 168-170, 176, 181.

¹⁴⁸ Velleius, 2.44.2; Plutarch, *Pomp.* 48.3; Dio, 38.7.5.

that Pompey had established with most rulers in the Levant increased Rome's grip on the region.

PART II.A

44-42 BC

2 PARTHIA

Caesar's assassination on the Ides of March 44 will have been welcomed by none of the kingdoms and principalities in the Near East as much as by Parthia. Caesar was about to set off on a campaign against Parthia, but his death led to the cancellation of the expedition against the only other power that could measure up to Rome in size and power.¹ Unlike most other realms in the Levant and in the areas of the Upper Euphrates basin, Parthia was largely excluded from the administrative reorganisation that Pompey implemented in the eastern Mediterranean.² The only tangible measures seem to have been the restoration of portions of Mesopotamia and Adiabene to Parthian rule. No territorial annexations or personnel changes are known to have occurred. Parthia thus came off much better than many other kingdoms and principalities in the Near East, such as Judaea and Armenia. The positive outcome nevertheless failed to guarantee peaceful relations between Parthia and Rome. King Phraates III was dissatisfied with the territories granted to him and sought to get hold of Gordyene as well, defying the decisions made by Pompey according to whom this district belonged to Armenia. The Parthian ruler thus resorted to military means in order to attain his aim, provoking people around Pompey to persuade him to begin a campaign against Parthia. Pompey decided against the idea. A military campaign was, however, about to begin in 56 or 55. In that year, Mithridates III, a son of Phraates III, had come to see the proconsul of Syria, A. Gabinius, to ask him for his support in the succession crisis in which he had been involved with his brother Orodes II since the death of their father. Gabinius was about to begin his invasion

¹ Appian, *BCiv.* 2.10; Plut. *Caes.* 58.6-7; Suetonius, *Iul.* 44.3; Dio, 43.51.1-9; Nicolaus of Damascus, *BNJ* 90 F130 (26). For more details on Caesar's intended campaign, see Townend (1983); Malitz (1984).

² On the political dealings between Pompey and Parthia in the mid-60s BC, see chapter 1.2.

when Ptolemy XII Auletes came to see him with a similar request. Apparently, since Ptolemy offered more, Gabinius decided to support the Egyptian king in his reinstatement.³ The status quo was only broken in 54 when the proconsul M. Licinius Crassus, the proconsul of Syria and associate of Pompey and Caesar, invaded Parthian-held territories east of the Euphrates – a move that eventually led to his downfall in 53, the demise of allegedly 20,000 soldiers, the capture of another 10,000, and the seizure of the standards.⁴ Two years later, the Parthians took the initiative by making a brief incursion into Roman territory in Syria, leading Cicero to worry about a full-scale invasion.⁵ With the onset of civil war in 49, the relations between Rome and Parthia took a different shape, as the Parthians became involved in Rome's internal political strife. Although they supported the Pompeian cause, the Parthians appear not to have been present at Pharsalus. How the relations between Rome and Parthia developed from the renewed outbreak of civil war in 44 will now be considered.

2.1 Parthian support for Cassius

Early in September 44, Cassius, one of the two leading tyrannicides, left Italy and headed by way of Asia to Syria, ignoring the province of Cyrenaica which had been assigned to him in August. Devoid of senatorial approval, Cassius entered Syria at the beginning of 43 and succeeded to enlist the favour of all armies and

³ Dio, 39.55-58; Strabo, 17.1.1. For more details on Gabinius' intended Parthian expedition, see among others Debevoise (1938) 75-78; Keaveney (1982) 412-417; Sherwin-White (1984) 272-273; Arnaud (1998); Lerouge (2007) 63-67.

⁴ For more details on Crassus' campaign against Parthia in 54 and 53, see among others Günther (1922) 14-38; Debevoise (1938) 78-95; Keaveney (1982) 417-426; Sherwin-White (1984) 279-290; Wolski (1993) 128-134; Lerouge (2007) 67-75.

⁵ Cicero, *Fam.* 5.14.1, 15.1.2-6; *Att.* 5.16.4; 5.20.6.

their commanders by the beginning of March.⁶ At that time, Cassius had still not gained senatorial authorisation for his position in Syria, despite a motion proposed to that effect by Cicero.⁷ Only in late April did the Senate take the decision to ratify his governorship of Syria. The same resolution also granted him the supreme command of the war against P. Cornelius Dolabella, consul of the year 44 who had begun a rebellion in Asia Minor.⁸ In the re-allotments of the consular provinces in April 44, Dolabella had received Syria. However, instead of proceeding to his allocated province, he went to Asia and executed the governor C. Trebonius early in the year 43.⁹ As a result of the assassination, Dolabella was declared a public enemy by the Senate and saw his command for the province of Syria rescinded. In spite of this measure, he ventured to move into Syria, but could not pose a serious threat to Cassius' position. Soon after his arrival, Dolabella had to take refuge to the city of Laodicea, where he was besieged by Cassius and ultimately committed suicide, probably late in July.¹⁰

In his struggle against Dolabella, Cassius did not only make use of regular Roman troops. In a letter to Cicero, a certain Cassius Parmensis informs us that in addition to ten Roman legions, his namesake was in command of twenty auxiliary

⁶ Livy, *Per.* 121; Velleius, 2.62.3; Appian, *BCiv.* 3.63; Dio, 46.40.3-4, 47.28.5. On Cassius' journey to the East and the initial allotment of Cyrenaica to him, see among others Magie (1950) 419; Broughton (1952) 320, 327, 343-344 with references.

⁷ Cicero, *Phil.* 11.30 proposes in a meeting of the Senate towards the end of February to assign the province of Syria and the command in the war against Dolabella to Cassius, and to grant him an *imperium maius* for the prosecution of this struggle. However, Cicero makes clear in a letter written in March and addressed to Cassius (*Fam.* 12.7) that his proposal has been rejected.

⁸ Cicero, *Phil.* 11.30; Cicero, *Fam.* 12.7.1. On the senatorial decision to bestow Syria upon Cassius and grant him the command over the war against Dolabella, see among others Broughton (1952) 343 with references.

⁹ Cicero, *Phil.* 11.4-5, 16, 28; *Fam.* 12.12.1, 12.14.5, 12.15.2, 5; *ad Brut.* 2.3.1, 5; Velleius, 2.69.1; Livy, *Per.* 119, 121; Appian, *BCiv.* 3.7-8, 12, 24-27, 61, 64, 4.57-58, 60; Dio, 47.28.5-29.3; Orosius, 6.18.6. For the source material on the allotment of Syria to Dolabella in April 44, and on Dolabella's decision to travel to Asia and execute Trebonius, see among others Magie (1950) 419-420; Broughton (1952) 317, 349-350; Rohr Vio (2006).

¹⁰ Cicero, *Fam.* 12.13.4, 12.14.4, 12.15.7; Velleius, 2.69.2; Strabo, 16.2.9; Livy, *Per.* 121; Appian, *BCiv.* 4.60-62, 5.4; Dio, 47.30.1-5; Orosius, 6.18.13. For more details on the siege of Laodicea by Cassius, see among others Magie (1950) 421; Broughton (1952) 344; Clarke (1981) 61.

cohorts and a cavalry force of 4000.¹¹ From what kingdoms, principalities and other communities these auxiliary units and horsemen originated, is not clarified by Cassius Parmensis. Fortunately, Dio is of some help in this respect, elucidating that Parthians (Πάρθοι) participated in the war against Dolabella.¹² Although the historian does not specify in what way the Parthians would have assisted Cassius, it is plausible that at least a fraction of them served as equestrian bowmen. Appian informs us that Cassius was joined by Parthian mounted archers at some point after his arrival in Syria early in 43.¹³ These mounted bowmen were only sent back to the Parthian king Orodes II later in the year when news of Octavian's and Antony's journey to the East had reached him.¹⁴ From that perspective, it is thus very well possible that at least a section of the Parthian forces participating on the side of Cassius in the war consisted of equestrian archers.

Well-attested as the presence of Parthians in the war against Dolabella thus is, the question that immediately comes up is what prompted them to render aid to Cassius. Being the only power in the Near East that could measure up to Rome, Parthia could not easily be pressurised by Rome. That Parthia supported Cassius militarily thus demonstrates a willingness to get actively involved in an internal Roman conflict. This requires an explanation. With regard to the Parthian mounted archers who joined the tyrannicide in 43 and who may have participated in the war against Dolabella, Appian explains that they were attracted to Cassius

¹¹ Cicero, *Fam.* 12.13.4.

¹² Dio, 47.30.3.

¹³ Appian, *BCiv.* 4.59. Debevoise (1938) 107 and Timpe (1962) 116 have argued that these Parthian auxiliary forces constituted a part of the armies that Cassius took over from Q. Caecilius Bassus, a former equestrian officer of Pompey, who functioned as the leader of a revolt among Roman troops in Syria from 46 until 43 (on which see chapter 4.1). In 45, a Parthian military force under Pacorus came to the assistance of Caecilius Bassus (Cicero, *Att.* 14.9.3; Dio, 47.27.2-5). This force, however, appears not to have remained with him for a long time. Dio, 47.27.5 makes clear that in view of the winter the Parthian auxiliaries left Syria. The Parthian mounted archers to which Appian refers thus cannot be identified with those troops that had come to assist Caecilius Bassus in 45. What is more, Appian's text does not indicate in any way that the equestrian bowmen joining Cassius in 43 had participated previously in Caecilius Bassus' rebellion. On the contrary, as explained further below, the passage seems to imply that the Parthian mounted archers had come especially to ally themselves with Cassius.

¹⁴ Appian, *BCiv.* 4.63.

because of the reputation (δόξα) he had earned among them when he served as quaestor to Crassus in the expedition against Parthia in 53.¹⁵ Cassius was responsible for the retreat of the Roman troops from Parthian territory after Crassus had fallen in battle.¹⁶ That on account of this role he thus enjoyed a rather good reputation is not necessarily disputable.¹⁷ It can even be imagined that his δόξα was one of the motivations behind the dispatch of the mounted archers to Syria in 43. Yet, it would go too far to regard Cassius' status as the main driving force behind the support granted in the war against Dolabella. An explanation for this assistance needs to be sought elsewhere.

Unfortunately, apart from the reference in Appian's *Civil Wars*, none of our extant literary works can provide us with any useful indications in this respect. For that reason it is difficult – if not impossible – to come up with a plausible explanation for Parthia's assistance to Cassius. Two scholars have nevertheless made attempts into this direction, but both of them fail to convince. Timpe argues that the Parthians had a natural disposition to support Rome's "Republicans" who were involved in domestic conflicts throughout the 40s BC.¹⁸ That there is, however, no reason to imagine why the Parthians would favour the Republican political outlook (whatever this exactly means) above the viewpoints of Caesar's supporters and political heirs, does not seem to have occurred to him.¹⁹ Less speculative, but not necessarily more forceful is the idea brought forward by Dabrowa. On the assumption that Orodes was determined to incorporate Syria and Asia Minor into his empire, he claims that the Parthian ruler rendered assistance to Cassius (as well as to Pompey's adherents earlier on), "parce qu'aussi bien les partisans de Pompée que les meurtriers de César étaient maîtres des

¹⁵ Appian, *BCiv.* 4.59.

¹⁶ Dio, 40.25.4; Velleius, 2.46.4; Eutropius, 6.18.2.

¹⁷ Cf. Timpe (1962) 116, who regards Cassius' friendly relations towards the Parthians as "erstaunlich".

¹⁸ Timpe (1962) 114.

¹⁹ Similar criticism in Dabrowa (1986) 123.

territoires de l'empire romain qui constituaient l'objet de ses efforts".²⁰ Dabrowa seems to imply that the grant of military assistance was exploited by Orodes as a means to negotiate the transfer of Syrian territory from Roman to Parthian hegemony. The existence of such a plan is according to Dabrowa corroborated by a passage in Dio's account which claims that Orodes had refused to give military assistance to Pompey in 48 in his conflict against Caesar, because Pompey was unwilling to confer Syria upon the king.²¹ Using Rome's withdrawal from Syria as a prerequisite for the provision of armed support to Pompey in 48, however, does not mean that in 43 the same condition was stipulated for the grant of auxiliaries to Cassius. With the earlier attempt to receive Syria having ended in failure, it is problematic to imagine how Orodes could sincerely have expected to find Cassius willing to hand over the only Roman province in the Near East to him. Different considerations are thus likely to have prompted Orodes to place Parthian troops at Cassius' disposal. Possibly, the Parthian ruler had become less ambitious, merely hoping that with the presence of Parthian troops in Syria he would be able to increase Parthian political influence west of the Euphrates among Cassius' other allies. Obviously, in the light of our evidence, certainty cannot be provided.

2.2 The embassy of Labienus and the Battle of Philippi

The Parthian mounted archers who had come into the possession of Cassius in 43 are said not have stayed with him continuously until the battles at Philippi in 42. When Cassius was about to undertake a punitive expedition against Cleopatra at the beginning of 42 for the support that she intended to give to Octavian and Antony, he received a message from Brutus, saying that Octavian and Antony were crossing the Adriatic.²² As a result of these events, he gave up his campaign

²⁰ Dabrowa (1986) 123.

²¹ Dio, 41.55.4.

²² Appian, *BCiv.* 4.63.

into Egypt and allegedly sent back his mounted archers (ἵπποτοξόται) with gifts and with a certain Q. Labienus as envoy to the Parthian king Orodes to ask for more troops.²³ At that time, Cassius could not have known that the dispatch of Labienus as part of an embassy to Parthia would have disastrous consequences for the eastern Mediterranean. The envoy did not return to Brutus and Cassius with Parthian military assistance. He remained in Parthia, became loyal to its king and, along with the king's son Pacorus, invaded Roman territories in Asia Minor and Syria in 40.²⁴ Whether before his defection he succeeded in persuading Orodes to send troops to assist Brutus and Cassius in the war against Octavian and Antony remains unclear. Although Appian has proposed that the forces for which Labienus' delegation asked did not arrive in Syria until after Philippi,²⁵ in a later passage he does reckon Parthian equestrian bowmen and other types of horsemen (ἵππεῖς) among the forces commanded by Cassius and Brutus on the eve of the clash.²⁶ The cavalry (ἵππεῖς) to which Appian refers may already have been with the tyrannicides from the moment that they had established their power base in the East. Yet, the alleged presence of mounted archers at Philippi is in flagrant contradiction with earlier statements made by Appian – an incongruity that most scholars seem to have ignored.²⁷ Only Sherwin-White has noted it, but his attempt at offering a 'solution' is unconvincing. Rejecting the presence of Parthian mounted archers at Philippi, he purports that the bowmen to which Appian refers did not consist of Parthians, Arabs and Medes, but were more likely recruited

²³ Dio, 48.24.5; Florus, 2.19.4. Cf. Appian, *BCiv.* 4.63, who merely refers to ambassadors (πρέσβεις) sent by Cassius to Parthian. Although the name of Labienus is not mentioned explicitly, it is clear that the embassy of which he was a member is meant. If we have to believe Appian, this embassy was dispatched sometime at the beginning of 42 after Cassius had received a message from Brutus informing him about Octavian's and Antony's crossing of the Adriatic. The inclusion of this announcement among events that indisputably occurred in the year 43 does not refute that date.

²⁴ On which, see chapter 8.1.

²⁵ Appian, *BCiv.* 4.63.

²⁶ Appian, *BCiv.* 4.88; 4.99.

²⁷ Günther (1922) 41; Debevoise (1938) 107-108; Timpe (1962) 116; Frye (1984) 234; Sullivan (1990) 311; Wolski (1993) 136; Lerouge (2007) 87. Even Magnino (1998) 215-216, 235-236, 242 has failed to show awareness of this contradiction in his commentary of book IV of Appian's *Civil Wars*.

among the Commagenians and among a people led by a certain Alchaudonius²⁸ – a rather problematic idea since none of our ancient sources provide us with any indication that suggests the presence of troops enlisted among those two peoples. Sherwin-White's proposal is thus better dismissed. How the contradiction in Appian's *Civil Wars* is to be 'solved' then remains uncertain. Both statements can be correct and there are no grounds for giving preference to one over the other, even though it appears to me somewhat peculiar that Cassius decided to return all the mounted archers in the beginning of 42, if his aim was to obtain a larger force of auxiliaries.

Conclusion

This chapter has revealed that for the period from 44 until 42 only three instances of interaction between Rome and Parthia can be identified with some degree of certainty: firstly, Parthian military support for Cassius in the confrontation against Dolabella; secondly, the dispatch by Cassius of an embassy to the Parthian king with requests for military assistance; and thirdly, the assistance provided by Parthian cavalry to the tyrannicides at Philippi. Parthian participation in the struggle against Dolabella testifies at any rate to their willingness to get involved into Rome's internal struggles. Possibly, the Parthians anticipated seeing their influence increased west of the Euphrates. Obviously, Cassius and Brutus will have dreaded a greater Parthian sway over the Levant, but both were apparently so desperate to increase the number of forces under their wings that they were prepared to ask for Parthian support and to take the risk of losing influence to

²⁸ Sherwin-White (1984) 302. Not much is known of this Alchaudonius. Dio, 40.20.1-2 refers to a certain Arab called Alchaudonius (ὁ Ἀλχαυδόνιος ὁ Ἀράβιος) who along with Abgar of Osroene supported the Parthians in 53 against the Roman invaders led by Crassus. Sherwin-White (1984) 282, 301-302 identifies this Alchaudonius with a certain Alchaedamnus, king of the Rhambaeans, who is mentioned by Strabo (16.2.10) among the allies of Q. Caecilius Bassus in the mid-40s BC. There seems, however, not to be any evidence to support this identification. On the revolt of Q. Caecilius Bassus, see chapter 4.1.

Parthia in the Near East. With Cassius and Brutus in control of the eastern Mediterranean, the relations between Rome and Parthia thus developed into a different direction than expected prior to Caesar's assassination, when an expedition into Parthia was about to be launched.²⁹ Whether in the years after Philippi Rome (and more specifically Antony as her representative in the East) used the Parthians as a potential source of military assistance, and to what extent Caesar's idea of a campaign into Parthia was revived, will be examined in Part II.B.

²⁹ See the introduction to this chapter.

3 PTOLEMAIC KINGDOM

Of all the kingdoms and principalities whose political relations with Rome form the subject of this study, the Ptolemaic Kingdom was the only one not involved in Pompey's reorganisation of the East. Despite requests made by king Ptolemy XII Auletes for assistance in dealing with some internal problems, Pompey refrained from taking any action. It was only after a revolt in Egypt had forced Auletes to flee his kingdom in 58 that Rome became entangled in the internal affairs of the Ptolemies. Although politicians in Rome could not come to an agreement with regard to the necessary course of action, the proconsul of Syria, A. Gabinius, attracted by a bribe, restored the exiled king to the throne in 55 – an event not unique in the history of the Ptolemies' relations.¹ Already in the second century BC, members of the ruling dynasty repeatedly appealed to Rome for recognition or requested to be reinstated.² Seven years after Gabinius' reinstatement of the king, Rome was once more drawn into an internal political conflict. This time it was Caesar who succeeded in bringing about a reconciliation between Cleopatra VII and her younger brother Ptolemy XIII, both of whom had been in almost continuous conflict with one another ever since their accession as joint rulers in 51 following the death of their father Auletes. The reunion proved to be short-lived. The relations between the two siblings degenerated rapidly and culminated into open warfare. During this conflict – known to us as the Alexandrian War – Caesar revealed himself as a staunch supporter of Cleopatra. The conflict ended in 47 into a victory for the queen and left Ptolemy XIII dead.³ In the aftermath of the

¹ For more details on Auletes' expulsion in 58 and his restoration to the throne in 55, see among others Broughton (1952) 218, with references; Sullivan (1990) 237-244; Huß (2001) 684-697; Hölbl (2001) 226-229.

² On which see among others chapter 17.1.

³ On Cleopatra's ejection, her reinstallation and the Alexandrian War, see among others Sullivan (1990) 255-259; Huß (2001) 705-722; Hölbl (2001) 235-237.

hostilities, at Caesar's initiative a joint reign and marriage were realised between Cleopatra and another of her younger brothers, Ptolemy XIV.⁴ The two siblings were summoned to Rome in 46, where Caesar "enrolled them among the friends and allies of the Roman people".⁵ To what extent these new associations imposed any legal obligations on the parties involved is not clear in the light of our limited evidence. Yet, whatever its exact meaning, the royal couple stayed for at least another two years in the capital. Soon after Caesar's assassination, Cleopatra returned to Egypt.⁶ How the relations between Rome and the Ptolemaic Kingdom developed from that moment onwards needs to be examined at present.

3.1 Supporting Dolabella

As we have seen above, early in September 44, Cassius left Italy and travelled by way of Asia Minor to Syria where he arrived around the beginning of 43. That he disregarded the province of Cyrenaica, which had been assigned to him, did not prove to be problematic. By the onset of March, Cassius had managed to secure the support of all the armies and their commanders, and about a month later, his control over the province of Syria was given approval by the Senate. At the same time he was also given command over the war against P. Cornelius Dolabella, the consul of 44 who had initially been allocated Syria, but who had seized Asia instead and arranged for the assassination of the proconsul C. Trebonius there – an act that had prompted the Senate to declare him an enemy. Dolabella thereupon raised infantry troops and a navy, and made his way to Syria, where as a result of the supremacy of Cassius' armies he was eventually surrounded and

⁴ Sullivan (1990) 259-260; Huß (2001) 720-721; Hölbl (2001) 237.

⁵ Dio, 43.27.3: "ἐς τοὺς φίλους σφᾶς τοὺς τε συμμάχους τοὺς τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἐσέγραψε". Cf. Suetonius, *Iul.* 52.1, who mentions Cleopatra's coming to Rome, but does not mention Ptolemy XIV or the enrolment among Rome's friends and allies; Hölbl (2001) 238; Bingen (2007) 47.

⁶ Cicero, *Att.* 14.8; Will (1967) 452; Sullivan (1990) 264; Hölbl (2001) 239.

besieged at Laodicea.⁷ Dio explains that Dolabella only managed for a while to maintain a position on the sea through the naval force (νῆες) that the Ptolemaic queen Cleopatra had placed at his disposal.⁸ Cleopatra is also said to have given him money (χρήματα). Appian explains that the queen rendered support to Dolabella because of her close relationship with the murdered Caesar – a conceivable suggestion, given that Dolabella fought on Caesar’s side against Pompeians in the 40s BC.⁹ Plausible as this suggestion is, though, all this aid turned out to be nothing more than a temporary reprieve. Cassius and his troops could not be defeated, and Dolabella, realising that he was in a desperate situation, eventually committed suicide.¹⁰

3.2 Recognition for Ptolemy XV Caesarion

Cleopatra’s support for Dolabella does not seem to have remained unremunerated. Dio informs us that because of the support that she had rendered to Dolabella, she was given the right to have her son Ptolemy XV (better known as Caesarion) called king (βασιλεύς) of Egypt.¹¹ As her brother and co-regent, Ptolemy XIV, had already been dead since the summer of 44, the elevation of Ptolemy XV did in no way mark the deposition of that co-ruler.¹² The son who

⁷ For sources and references, see chapter 2.1.

⁸ Dio, 47.30.4; Appian, *BCiv.* 4.61.

⁹ Appian, *BCiv.* 4.61; 2.41, 47; Cicero, *Fam.* 9.9; *Phil.* 2.75; Suetonius, *Iul.* 36; Florus, 2.13.31; Dio, 41.40.1-2; Orosius, 6.15.8.

¹⁰ Strabo, 16.2.9; Velleius, 2.69.2; Livy, *Per.* 121; Appian, *BCiv.* 4.62; Dio, 47.30.5; Orosius, 6.18.13.

¹¹ Dio, 47.31.5.

¹² The time of Ptolemy XIV’s death can only roughly be determined. There is proof of him still being co-regent in July of 44 since his regnal years were used to date a document in Egypt at that time. A statement made by Porphyry, *BNJ* 260 F2 (17) (transmitted by Eusebius in his *Chronographia*) demonstrates that Ptolemy passed away in his fourth regnal year, which corresponds to Cleopatra’s eighth year in office. Skeat (1969) 18, 42 has revealed that Cleopatra’s regnal years ran from the beginning of September until the following September. This means that Ptolemy XIV must have passed away by the beginning of September 44 – a conclusion shared by Samuel (1962) 158-159 and Sullivan (1990) 264-265 among others. Both Porphyry l.c.; Josephus, *Ap.* 2.57-58 and *AJ* 15.89 inform us that the young king was assassinated – an act for which they hold

received recognition as king by Rome was the one who Cleopatra claimed to be the child of Julius Caesar.¹³ Most scholars have argued that it was Dolabella who gave Cleopatra the right to call Caesarion king of Egypt. This assertion, however, cannot find support in the sources.¹⁴ In order to understand that, it is necessary to give the relevant passage in Dio's *Roman History* in full. Having described how Cassius penalised the city of Tarsus for their support of Dolabella, Dio expounds what benefits were granted to this city by the triumvirs, and subsequently also explains how Cleopatra was remunerated for past support to Dolabella:

"The people of Tarsus received praise from the triumvirs (for they were already holding sway in Rome), and were inspired with hope of obtaining some return for their losses; Cleopatra also, on account of the auxiliary force she had sent to Dolabella, obtained the right that her son, whom she named Ptolemy and pretended to be engendered by Caesar, and for that reason addressed as Caesarion, was called king of Egypt".¹⁵

Dio makes clear that the military support given by Cleopatra to Dolabella played a leading role in the decision to give her the right to have her son called king of Egypt. The text does not clarify who was responsible for granting this right, but it is suggested that the triumvirs and not Dolabella himself were responsible for that. The potential threat that Ptolemy XV could pose to Octavian (who as adopted *divi Iulii filius* could be considered his rival) will not have withheld Octavian from

Cleopatra responsible. For background of the murder, see among others Sullivan (1990) 264-265; Hölbl (2001), 239; Huß (2001) 726.

¹³ Dio, 47.31.5. The paternity of Caesarion has been an unsolvable issue since antiquity (Suetonius, *Iul.* 52.2; *Aug.* 17.5; Cicero, *Att.* 14.20; cf. Plutarch, *Caes.* 49.5, who seems to be certain about Caesar's paternity of Caesarion). For a modern debate on the paternity of Caesarion, see Heinen (1969) 190-203; Sullivan (1990) 262; Hölbl (2001) 238.

¹⁴ Sullivan (1990) 265-266; Hölbl (2001) 239.

¹⁵ Dio, 47.31.4-5: "Ταρσεῖς ἐπαίνους τε παρὰ τῶν τριῶν ἀνδρῶν (ἐκεῖνοι γὰρ τὰ πράγματα ἤδη τὰ ἐν τῇ Ῥώμῃ εἶχον) καὶ ἐλπίδα ἀντιλήψεσθαι τι ἀντὶ τῶν ἀπολωλότων ἔλαβον· ἥ τε Κλεοπάτρα διὰ τὴν συμμαχίαν ἣν τῷ Δολαβέλλᾳ ἔπεμψεν, εὗρετο τὸν υἱόν, ὃν Πτολεμαῖον μὲν ὠνόμαζεν, ἐπλάττετο δὲ ἐκ τοῦ Καίσαρος τετοκέσθαι καὶ κατὰ τοῦτο Καισαρίωνα προσηγόρευε, βασιλέα τῆς Αἰγύπτου κληθῆναι".

taking that joint decision. On the contrary, considering the negative connotations embedded in the term *rex*, the elevation to the kingship served as an obstacle to the acquisition of a position within the Roman state as strong as or even stronger than Caesar's.

When Cleopatra was granted the right to call her son king of Egypt is unknown, but Dio mentions this event under the year 42. Possibly, it was the queen herself who asked for Caesarion to be confirmed as king of Egypt by Rome; our source material does not give us any definite answers. That Rome recognised Ptolemy XV as king of Egypt does at least demonstrate to what extent Rome deemed it justified to intervene into the internal affairs of a nominally autonomous realm. By the time that this acknowledgement was given, the Ptolemaic Kingdom was thus already considered a part of Rome's empire.

Conclusion

Cleopatra was the only Near Eastern ruler known to have supported the cause of the triumvirs in the two years following Caesar's assassination. Yet, she is not known to have participated in the Battles of Philippi. Overlooking the period of civil war between 44 and 42, only two different types of interaction between Rome and the Ptolemaic Kingdom can be identified. In the first place, Cleopatra supported Dolabella in the war against Cassius by sending him naval vessels and money; in the second place, Rome (or possibly more specifically the triumvirs) recognised Caesarion as king of Egypt. Although it is not clear whether Cleopatra explicitly asked for her son's recognition, Caesarion's acknowledgement as king of Egypt does at least show how freely Rome intervened into the domestic politics of a kingdom or principality.

4 JUDAEA

For a period of more than seventy years following the end of Seleucid rule in Palestine in the late 140s BC, political contacts between Judaea and Rome had been limited to a small number of diplomatic transactions, some of which led to the conclusion of an alliance. The internal strife between the Hasmonaean brothers Aristobulus and Hyrcanus, who both laid claim to the High Priesthood and kingship upon the death of their mother Alexandra in 67, made an end to this phase of political aloofness. Rome considered the succession crisis a potential threat to the peace in Syria and its other provinces in the East; an intervention to bring a solution to the conflict became vital. In 63, Pompey overcame the deadlock after having been approached with an appeal for support by delegations from both brothers. Pompey decided in favour of Hyrcanus, defeated Aristobulus and his supporters in battle, and reorganised the internal administration of Judaea. Hyrcanus was given back the High Priesthood and leadership (προστασία) over the Judaeans (possibly as ἐθνάρχης), but his title of king was rescinded. In addition, the geographical extent of Judaea was substantially reduced, and the seized territories fell henceforth under the command of the Syrian governor. Pompey also imposed the payment of tribute upon the Judaeans, which alongside the annexation of the coastal cities, proved to be a drain on the economic resources of Judaea.¹ All these measures remained largely unchanged until in 57 the proconsul of Syria A. Gabinius divided Judaea into five administrative districts and took away from Hyrcanus his political duties, leaving him in all likelihood

¹ For details on Pompey's reorganisation, see chapter 1.7.

merely the exercise of his responsibilities as High Priest.² For how long Gabinius' decision remained in effect cannot be said for certain, but it is clear that the partition had at least already come to an end by the time that on Caesar's initiative modifications were implemented in Judaea's administration, around the mid-40s BC. Among the most important arrangements were the return of the coastal city of Joppa, the return of the Plain of Esdraelon, the recognition of Hyrcanus as ἐθνάρχης of the Judaeans, and the resolution that both this position and the High Priesthood were to become hereditary.³ Caesar also promoted Antipater, the strong man behind Hyrcanus, to an official post in the government of Judaea by appointing him as ἐπίτροπος over Judaea under Hyrcanus.⁴ What duties Antipater was expected to accomplish exactly in this capacity remains unknown, but he seems at least to have held some supervisory role in the collection of the land tax which had been levied ever since Pompey's reorganisation of Judaea in 63,⁵ and which Caesar modified.⁶ Yet, whatever his precise role was, it is clear that

² Josephus, *AJ* 14.90-91; *BJ* 1.169-170. For more details on Gabinius' reorganisation of Judaea, see among others Kanael (1957); Bammel (1961); Momigliano (1967) 6-7, 20; Smallwood (1967); Schürer (1973) 267-269; Smallwood (1976) 31-35; Baumann (1983) 52-64.

³ See map 3 for clarification.

⁴ Josephus, *AJ* 14.137, 143-144, 192-195, 207-212; *BJ* 1.194, 199-200. For more details on Caesar's measures with regard to Judaea, see among others Abel (1952) 310-318; Schalit (1969) 36-40; Schürer (1973) 270-276; Smallwood (1976) 38-43; Baumann (1983) 69-106.

⁵ The exact tasks that Antipater was supposed to undertake as ἐπίτροπος cannot be established with certainty. Although the term is often used in Greek documents and literary texts during the Roman Imperial period to denote a procurator (Mason (1974) 49 s.v. ἐπίτροπος, 142-143), it is not clear whether in this instance ἐπίτροπος is to be understood as a translation of that particular Roman position. What is more, even if Antipater had been appointed as procurator, then this would by itself not elucidate what his duties were. Procurators exercised a wide variety of duties, especially during the imperial period. Some were put in charge of the tax collection in a Roman province, whereas others were to rule as governor of an entire province, such as Judaea after the death of Agrippa I in AD 44. The title ἐπίτροπος – even if a translation of “procurator” – does by itself thus not explain what tasks Antipater was to perform. Smallwood (1976) 39 has nevertheless argued with some degree of confidence that “Antipater was to act as resident representative of Rome, safeguarding Roman financial interests”. Although it seems indeed likely that Antipater was to look after Rome's financial concerns in Judaea – in particular when taking into account that he was the one who coordinated the collection of 700 talents exacted by Cassius in 43 (on which see below) – it may go too far to try to identify the duties of Antipater's position precisely. As Abel (1952) 312; Schalit (1969) 40, *ibid.* n.126 Baumann (1983) 95 and, to a lesser extent, Buchheim (1960) 62 have argued, the formal boundaries of the post may have been left indefinite, and as such have given Antipater the opportunity to act as he saw fit.

with the advancement of Hyrcanus and Antipater and with the return of some territories, Judaea had succeeded in regaining some of its erstwhile grandeur that it had lost in 63. How its political relations with Rome developed in the period up to Philippi will be examined at present.

4.1 *Judaeen support for the Caesareans in Syria*

As explored in the preceding two chapters, Cassius left Italy in autumn and made his way to the Levant.⁷ At arrival in Syria around the beginning of 43, the legions of Q. Marcius Crispus, proconsul of Bithynia and Pontus, and L. Staius Murcus, proconsul of Syria,⁸ were engaged in a war with a certain Q. Caecilius Bassus, one of Pompey's former equestrian officers, who had settled in Tyre after the Battle at Pharsalus.⁹ The origin of this military conflict dates back to the year 46, when Sextus Iulius Caesar, appointed as legate or as quaestor *pro praetore* over Syria by his famous kinsman Gaius Iulius Caesar in 47, was assassinated by some of his soldiers who had launched a revolt against him.¹⁰ What exactly had prompted those troops to rebel against Sextus cannot be determined with certainty because of contradicting reports provided by our ancient authors. For the same reason, it is unclear what role Caecilius had played in the early stages of the uprising. In the accounts of Livy, Dio,¹¹ and to a lesser extent the version that Appian ascribes to a certain Libo,¹² this former equestrian officer is identified as the initiator of the

⁶ Josephus, *AJ* 14.202-203, 206 provides us with the details of the tax. For a modern discussion of Caesar's measures with regard to the taxes imposed on Judaea, see Schalit (1969) 777-781; Smallwood (1976) 40-41.

⁷ See chapters 2.1.

⁸ On the proconsulship of Marcius Crispus and Staius Murcus, see Broughton (1952) 309, 329-330.

⁹ Appian, *BCiv.* 3.77-78; Dio, 47.26.3, 47.28.1.

¹⁰ On Sex. Iulius Caesar's official position in Syria, see Broughton (1952) 289.

¹¹ Dio, 47.26.3-27.1; Livy, *Per.* 114. Cf. Josephus, *AJ* 14.268; *BJ* 1.216, who does not mention a revolt. He merely refers (in *AJ*) to Caecilius contriving (συνθεῖς) a plot against Sextus.

¹² Appian, *BCiv.* 3.77. It has been suggested by Perizonius (1771) 183 that the name Libo (Λιβώνι) is to be emended into Livy (Λιβίω) – a seemingly plausible suggestion considering the similarity

rebellion among the legionaries in Syria, whereas in an alternative account transmitted by Appian, some soldiers in Syria are said to have begun the uprising and to have made Caecilius their leader only after Sextus' assassination.¹³ Yet, whoever took the initiative, it is clear that Caecilius emerged as the leader of this insurrection, managed to win over almost all the troops in the province, and turned the city of Apamea into his base.¹⁴ Without doubt, the assassination of Sextus and the defection of the Roman troops in Syria to the Pompeian general Caecilius alarmed Julius Caesar. The suppression of this renegade and possibly also the re-installation of a governor in Syria loyal to Caesar soon became top priority. As a means to achieve this aim, Caesar dispatched Q. Cornificius, probably quaestor *pro praetore* in Cilicia at that time, to Syria.¹⁵ However, neither Cornificius, nor C. Antistius Vetus, whom Caesar had sent off a year later with possibly the same rank, could keep Caecilius and his army in check.¹⁶ In 44, the new proconsul of Syria, Staius Murcus, made attempts with three legions to subdue the armies of Caecilius. The proconsul of Bithynia, Marcius Crispus, came to assist Staius Murcus, taking with him three more legions as reinforcements.¹⁷ Assistance for the Caesarean cause, however, did not only come from governors loyal to Caesar. Josephus informs us that military support was also granted by Antipater, who "for the sake of his friends, the deceased and the surviving

between the two accounts. There is, however, no compelling reason for rectifying the text as it has been transmitted to us. Appian can also have meant L. Scribonius Libo, the consul of 34. The argument used by Perizonius according to which this Libo is not known to have written on this particular period is unconvincing.

¹³ Appian, *BCiv.* 3.77, 4.58. Broughton (1952) 297; Schalit (1969) 47; Schürer (1973) 276 and Sherwin-White (1984) 301-302 ignore this view, and hold Caecilius Bassus responsible for the outbreak of the revolt among the troops in Syria. Only Münzer (1899) 1198 and Magnino (1984) 183 appear to have noticed the two opposing accounts. Both authors give preference to the version according to which Caecilius is held responsible for having stirred up the revolt among the Roman legions in Syria, but the arguments used only support their preferred account, and none of them actually refute the possibility of the alternative reading which is given by Appian only.

¹⁴ Strabo, 16.2.10; Dio, 47.27.1. For the best overview of Caecilius' revolt with references to the source material, see still Münzer (1899).

¹⁵ Cicero, *Fam.* 12.19.1; Broughton (1952) 297; Sherwin-White (1984) 301.

¹⁶ Dio, 47.27.2-4; Broughton (1952) 308.

¹⁷ Appian, *BCiv.* 3.77; 4.58; Dio, 47.27.5.

Caesar” sent troops to Syria together with his two sons Phasael and Herod (the later king).¹⁸ That friendship played a role behind Antipater’s decision to render aid – as suggested here by Josephus – is highly conceivable.¹⁹ Antipater and his offspring had maintained good relations with them, and had profited to varying degrees from some of the measures that both Caesars had taken. Above all the benefits that they had received from Gaius Caesar in 47 as remuneration for Judaea’s armed assistance in the Alexandrian War may have prompted Antipater to send auxiliaries to Syria.²⁰ Caesar not only made Antipater ἐπίτροπος of Judaea (as we have seen above), he also conferred citizenship upon him and his children, and granted him exemption from paying tax.²¹ Yet, however much these benefits and the resultant friendship may have imposed a moral obligation on Antipater to dispatch military aid, the rewards that Sextus Caesar was to bestow later during the year are not to be ignored, especially not if Josephus is to be believed in his *Jewish Antiquities*:

“Antipater... sent them [Caesar’s generals, ed.] an auxiliary force together with his sons, being mindful of the good services they had received from [Sextus, ed.] Caesar, and, on that account, thought it just to avenge him and exact satisfaction from his murderer [Caecilius Bassus, ed]”.²²

¹⁸ Josephus, *BJ* 1.217: “διὰ τὸν ἀνηρημένον καὶ διὰ τὸν περιόντα Καίσαρα, φίλους ὄντας ἀμφοτέρους”. The military support granted by Antipater is also mentioned in *AJ* 14.269.

¹⁹ Friendship between Antipater and Gaius Caesar has not only been testified by Josephus in *BJ* 1.217, but also in *BJ* 1.194 and indirectly in the anonymous *B.Alex.* 65. The friendship between Antipater and Sextus Caesar is mentioned explicitly in *BJ* 1.217, and is implied in *AJ* 14.164.

²⁰ Judaeans support for Caesar in the Alexandrian War is attested by Josephus, *AJ* 14.127-136; *BJ* 1.187-192.

²¹ Josephus, *AJ* 14.137, 143-144; *BJ* 1.194, 199-200. Josephus only refers to the grant of citizenship to Antipater, but through this act, Roman citizenship was automatically also awarded to his offspring.

²² Josephus, *AJ* 14.268-269: “τούτοις δὲ... Ἀντίπατρος συμμαχίαν ἔπεμψε μετὰ τῶν τέκνων, κατὰ μνήμην ὧν εὐεργετήθησαν ὑπὸ Καίσαρος, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο τιμωρεῖν αὐτῷ καὶ δίκην παρὰ τοῦ πεφονευκότος εἰσπράξασθαι δίκαιον ἡγούμενος” (LCL transl. adapted).

Although no further details are given with regard to those “good services”, it is plausible that Josephus refers here at least in part to the governmental post that Sextus Caesar had given to Antipater’s son Herod in the province of Syria.²³ The conferment of this official position took place at some point towards the end of 47 or the beginning of 46. At that time, Herod stood trial before the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem for his allegedly unauthorised execution of brigands led by a certain Ezekias, who were wreaking havoc on the Galilee.²⁴ Herod had been appointed as στρατηγός over that latter district by his father Antipater earlier in 47.²⁵ His political career would almost certainly have come to an abrupt end had not Sextus Caesar compelled Hyrcanus to let him escape Jerusalem and make his way to Damascus.²⁶ At arrival there, Herod was made “στρατηγός of Coele Syria” and of the city of Samaria.²⁷ Although the exact geographical region to which the term Coele Syria refers in this particular context cannot be determined with certainty, it

²³ Antipater’s other son, Phasaël, who would later be given official positions by Rome (as we will see), does not seem to have been given a position by Sextus Caesar at this point.

²⁴ On the suppression of the bandits in the Galilee and the subsequent trial against Herod, see Josephus, *AJ* 14.159-160, 167-184; *BJ* 1.204-205, 208-215. For further discussion of the brigands and Herod’s trial, see Baumann (1983) 108-113.

²⁵ Josephus, *AJ* 14.158; *BJ* 1.203. Both passages also inform us that Phasaël was made στρατηγός of Jerusalem and the surrounding area. As στρατηγοί, Herod and Phasaël may have functioned as the head of their respective districts. Potential explanations for Antipater’s move are given by Baumann (1983) 107-108.

²⁶ Josephus, *AJ* 14.170, 177-178; *BJ* 1.211-212.

²⁷ Josephus, *BJ* 1.213. Cf. *AJ* 14.280, which does not mention Samaria. Herod’s control over Samaria as στρατηγός seems nevertheless fairly certain in the light of what Josephus relates in *AJ* 14.284 and *BJ* 1.229. In both passages reference is made to Herod terminating a conflict among the people of Samaria in 43 – an intervention that can only make sense if Herod held a position of authority over that city. The same argument is used by Otto (1913) 18; Schalit (1969) 46 n.154 and Smallwood (1976) 45 n.4 to show that Herod had been appointed as στρατηγός over Coele Syria and Samaria. Cf. Richardson (1999) 112, who wrongly asserts that the *Jewish War* refers to Herod being appointed στρατηγός over Coele Syria and Samaritis. *BJ* 1.213 clearly mentions the city of Σαμαρεία, not to the entire district which is sometimes called Σαμαρείτις. No wonder that according to Richardson (p.112 n.68) “the reference to Samaritis seems quite implausible”. The exact powers that Herod had as στρατηγός of Coele Syria and Samaria remain unknown. Otto (1913) 18 and Schalit (1969) 46 n.154 proposes that he had probably the same responsibilities as the previous Ptolemaic and Seleucid στρατηγοί installed in the area of Judaea.

is not unlikely that the Decapolis is meant here.²⁸ Just like Samaria, the cities that constituted this district had come under Judaeian rule for some decades before their incorporation into the new Roman province of Syria in 63.²⁹ Now Sextus seems to have placed the control over these places into the hands of Herod. That this appointment as well as Sextus' efforts in averting Herod's prosecution encouraged Antipater to avenge Sextus' assassination by participating in the war against the culprits is understandable. The good relations maintained with Gaius Caesar are definitely not to be discounted, though (as we saw above). Possibly, Antipater anticipated receiving further remuneration from Gaius Caesar for the dispatch of the auxiliaries to Syria. Yet, whatever drove him, it is clear that the

²⁸ If so, Herod's appointment would present us with much earlier evidence for the Decapolis as an administrative unit than the career inscription, presented by Isaac (1981), which refers to an equestrian officer holding an official position over the Decapolis in the Flavian period.

²⁹ The toponym "Coele Syria" (Κοίλη Συρία) has been used by ancient authors to designate various regions of the Levant. The term appeared for the first time in Greek language at the beginning of the fourth century BC. Schalit (1954) 68-70 and Sartre (1988) 22, 26 among others have convincingly argued that at that time "Coele Syria" signified "the whole of Syria" from the Levantine coast in the west to the river Euphrates in the east covering the entire area of the old Achaemenid satrapy called *kul 'awar nahara* ("everything beyond the river"). The word Κοίλη in this context does thus not mean "hollow" (κοῖλος), but "whole", and originates probably as a Greek transliteration from the Aramaic word "*kul*". As a result of administrative changes in the Levant during the following two and a half centuries, the toponym "Coele Syria" acquired additional narrower meanings, whereby it was used to refer to different parts of Syria. Throughout antiquity, though, it never seems to have lost its original meaning. An examination of the occurrences of the term "Coele Syria" in Greek and Latin literature by Sartre (1988) 21-27 has revealed that it was still employed in its original meaning by Claudius Ptolemy and Arrian in the second century AD. How the toponym "Coele Syria" is to be understood in Josephus' passages referring to Herod's appointment as στρατηγός over that region in 47 cannot be determined with certainty. It seems most likely, though, that in this case it signifies the Decapolis, as argued by Smallwood (1976) 45 n.4 as well. The term "Coele Syria" appears about 40 times in Josephus' corpus. For about 20 instances it is possible to grasp the notion of what region is meant – even if in a rather vague way. As Buchheim (1960) 100-101 n.28 has already clarified, in most of those occurrences, the term designates regions east of the Jordan River (see e.g. Josephus, *AJ* 13.355-356, 14.40-41; *BJ* 1.366). The only area east of that river known to have formed a part of the province of Syria in 47 was the Decapolis, the Greek cities that Pompey had detached in 64 and 63 from Judaeian rule and placed under the Roman provincial rule. Although the area may not have been physically disconnected from the province of Syria, its location was definitely somewhat isolated. To the west, the Decapolis was bordered by Judaea and to the north by the Principedom of Chalcis in the Beqā'. For Herod, though, it would not have been difficult to rule this area, as it was located immediately east of the Galilee, the district that he administered as στρατηγός. Sextus probably realised this, and may have taken these geographical facts into consideration when he decided to give a governmental post to Herod. "Coele Syria" in this instance refers thus in all likelihood to the Decapolis. Other regions east of the Jordan are excluded, because they came under the authority of other rulers.

Judaean participation did not lead to a victory over Caecilius. By the time that Cassius entered Syria around the beginning of 43, the conflicting parties were still involved in a war. Whether Judaean troops were present at that time is undecided, but the possibility can at any rate not be excluded.

4.2 *The imposition of financial contributions*

By the beginning of spring 43, Cassius had managed to conciliate all the conflicting parties and attained command over the former troops of Caecilius, Marcius Crispus and Staius Murcus – twelve legions according to Appian.³⁰ The acquisition of all the armies in Syria enabled Cassius within several months to secure an absolute position of power in the Roman Near East. The unsuccessful invasion of Dolabella proved to be the last hurdle withholding Cassius from supreme authority over Syria.³¹ While the accumulation of his power was still in progress, the drawbacks of Cassius' supremacy became already visible. His newly gained position depended largely on the strength and loyalty of a considerable military force, for the maintenance of which enormous funds were necessary.³² Financial resources were mainly extracted from the cities and local communities in the eastern Roman provinces.³³ However, the two historical accounts of Josephus explain that Cassius also ordered the contribution of 700 talents of silver from Judaea proper and almost certainly from all the other regions of greater Judaea as

³⁰ Cicero, *Fam.* 12.11-12; *Ad. Brut.* 2.3.3; Velleius, 2.69.2; *AJ* 14.271-272; *BJ* 1.218-219; Appian, *BCiv.* 3.78, 4.59; Dio, 47.28.1.

³¹ For more details on Cassius' war on Dolabella, see chapter 3.1.

³² Schalit (1969) 47; Schürer (1973) 277; Baumann (1983) 117-118.

³³ After the capture of Laodicea in 43, Cassius imposed the payment of tribute on its citizens as a punishment for their support of Dolabella (Appian, *BCiv.* 4.62; Dio, 47.30.7; Strabo, 16.2.9). Cassius also exacted contributions from Tarsus – 1500 talents according to Appian, *BCiv.* 4.64. At some point in the first months of 42, Cassius was entangled in a conflict with Rhodes. Eventually, he subjugated this city and demanded money, gold and silver from the citizens (Appian, *BCiv.* 4.73; Plutarch, *Brut.* 32.2; Dio, 47.33.3-4). Appian, *BCiv.* 4.74 informs us that Cassius ordered all the peoples in Asia to pay the tribute for ten years. On all these exactions, see among others Gowing (1992) 166-171.

well.³⁴ Whether this tribute was levied in addition to the land tax which Pompey had installed and which Caesar modified, is unknown.³⁵ Possibly in his capacity as ἐπίτροπος, Antipater assigned the collection of this amount to several persons, among whom were his sons and a certain noble called Malichus.³⁶ Although the source material does not clarify which sons precisely were involved in the levy of this tax, it is at any rate evident that Herod participated.³⁷ He undertook the collection in the Galilee and was allegedly the first to have raised his share of 100 talents.³⁸ Cassius was appeased by the promptness with which Herod had collected the tribute and would remunerate him soon for his eagerness (see below). In contrast, Malichus, and perhaps also the other tax-collectors, incurred the resentment of Cassius for the dilatoriness in handing over the contribution.³⁹ Cassius would even have inflicted capital punishment upon Malichus, had Hyrcanus not, through Antipater, averted the execution by the payment of 100 talents.⁴⁰ Cassius also reduced the cities of Gophna, Emmaus, Lydda, Thamna and

³⁴ Josephus, *AJ* 14.272: Josephus claims that the contribution was imposed on Judaea. Since in *AJ* 14.274 it is said that Herod had raised his share of the tribute in the Galilee, it is clear that the scope of this contribution of 700 talents extended beyond Judaea proper and included probably all the other regions of the larger Judaea as well; cf. *BJ* 1.220, where Josephus says that 700 talents were ordered from the Judaeans.

³⁵ On the taxation imposed by Pompey, see chapter 1.7. Caesar seems to have altered the workings of this tax, as we pointed out briefly in the introduction to this chapter.

³⁶ Josephus, *AJ* 14.272-273; *BJ* 1.220-221.

³⁷ Cf. Smallwood (1976) 46, who presumes that only two sons were involved in the collection of the tribute. Which of the sons are meant, is not clarified, but Smallwood probably refers to Herod and Phasael. However, when Josephus says (*AJ* 14.273; *BJ* 1.220) that Antipater assigned the collections of the tax to his sons (υἱοί), he does not specify which sons are meant exactly. Antipater is known to have had four sons who were all adults at the time of the levy of Cassius' tax and could thus all be involved. Besides Herod and Phasael, Antipater fathered Joseph and Pheroras. On Antipater's sons, see Kokkinos (1998) 156-176, and stemma 2 in the appendix of the thesis.

³⁸ Josephus, *AJ* 14.274; *BJ* 1.221.

³⁹ Josephus, *AJ* 14.274, 276; *BJ* 1.221-222. Josephus mentions in *BJ* 1.221 that "others" ("τοὺς λοιπούς") were abused for their dilatoriness. Although it is not made explicit to whom "others" refer, it seems clear that the other tax-collectors are meant.

⁴⁰ Josephus, *AJ* 14.276; cf. *BJ* 1.222 which fails to mention Hyrcanus, but does, unlike *AJ*, refer to "other cities" ("τῶν ἄλλων πόλεων") which would have been saved from destruction as a result of the gift of 100 talents to Cassius. An identification of those "other cities" is not possible.

perhaps the “officials of other cities” to servitude.⁴¹ Unfortunately, the exact reason for this measure cannot be extracted from the source material. Even though several scholars hold the delay of those cities in levying their tribute as the main cause for their reduction to servitude,⁴² it is equally possible that Cassius was merely after the financial resources of these communities as a means to accumulate his wealth.

In both historical accounts, Josephus attributes the supervision over the collection of the 700 talents to Antipater. No managerial role has been attested for Hyrcanus. Only in the *Jewish Antiquities* (14.276) does the High Priest feature in the events, when he is said to have saved Malichus’ life by the gift of 100 talents through Antipater. Why is such a prominent role imputed to Antipater in the levy of the tribute? Unfortunately, a certain answer cannot be given to this question. Possibly, it was Antipater rather than Hyrcanus whom Cassius had approached with the demand to assume supervision over the collection. As expounded above, Antipater may already in his position as ἐπίτροπος have been responsible for the exaction of the tax that Pompey had installed for Judaea in the late 60s BC. In that case, it would be logical for Cassius to put Antipater and not Hyrcanus in charge of the levy of the tribute of 700 talents.

Yet, it is also possible that Hyrcanus’ efforts in the collection of the tribute have deliberately been marginalised or distorted by Josephus in his two historical works.⁴³ Schwartz has already demonstrated that the tendency to downplay the feats for which Hyrcanus was responsible and, simultaneously, to stress Antipater’s accomplishments, can be found throughout the relevant sections in

⁴¹ Josephus, *AJ* 14.275: “τῶν ἄλλων πόλεων ἐπιμεληταί”. Cf. *BJ* 1.222, which only mentions Gophna and Emmaus explicitly and seems to refer to Kydda and Thamna implicitly as “two other places of lesser importance” (“δύο ἑτέρας τῶν ταπεινοτέρων”). *BJ* does not refer to the “officials of other cities”.

⁴² Abel (1952) 320; Schalit (1969) 48; Schürer (1973) 277; Richardson (1999) 115; cf. Smallwood (1976) 46, who argues that Cassius sold off the inhabitants of these four cities into slavery “to obtain ready cash”.

⁴³ A suggestion implied by Richardson (1999) 114.

Josephus' writings, especially in the earlier *Jewish War*.⁴⁴ One of Josephus' aims for this earlier account appears to have been to offer a justification for the demise of the Hasmonaean dynasty and for the rise of the Antipatrids as new rulers of Judaea. For the realisation of this purpose, it was important to portray the transfer of power from Hyrcanus and the Hasmonaean dynasty to Herod's family as a legitimate development. The core strategy employed by Josephus to accomplish this was to show the achievements of Antipater and his sons in the best possible light, and to ignore or misrepresent Hyrcanus' successes.⁴⁵ Although Josephus' intentions in the *Jewish Antiquities* appear to have been different, here, too, the reader does not encounter an accurate and objective view of Hyrcanus' achievements. One of Josephus' main intentions for his later work was to explain how Hyrcanus' incompetence as a ruler eventually contributed to the downfall of the Hasmonaean dynasty and the rise of the Antipatrids.⁴⁶ For this reason, Josephus has in all likelihood also in his *Jewish Antiquities* distorted some of Hyrcanus' accomplishments. It is thus very well possible that the sections in the *Jewish War* and the *Jewish Antiquities* dealing with the collection of the 700 talents do not give us an accurate rendering of the role played by Hyrcanus in it, all the more so when the differences between the two versions are taken into account. Yet, in whatever way Hyrcanus participated in the exaction of the contribution, Cassius seems in the end to have got for what he asked despite the resistance that he encountered from some cities. The cooperation that Antipater, his sons and other Judaeans

⁴⁴ On which see Schwartz (1994) 227-229, who persistently presents Josephus' view on Hyrcanus and the Antipatrids in his *Jewish War* as the view of the Greek author Nicolaus of Damascus. Schwartz even admits (p. 217) to take for granted that the *Jewish War* reflects Nicolaus' point of view with regard to Herod. Although it is well-known that Josephus relied heavily on Nicolaus' *Universal History*, of which only fragments of a few books are extant, it would go too far to claim that the views on Hyrcanus and the Antipatrids put forward by Josephus in his *Jewish War* constitute a reproduction of Nicolaus' stance on this issue, taking into account that parts of the *Universal History* dealing with this particular period are unknown to us. On Josephus' usage of Nicolaus' *Universal History*, see among others Bloch (1879) 106-116; Schürer (1973) 28, 30-31; Stern (1974a) 21-26, 30; Wacholder (1989).

⁴⁵ Schwartz (1994) 227.

⁴⁶ Schwartz (1994) 217-232.

officials rendered in the levy of the contribution, however, does not mean that they were enthusiastic about partaking in the financial drainage of Judaea. Rather, the assistance that Cassius received shows how difficult it had become for Judaea to maintain an independent political course in defiance of Rome. The entire Judaeian nobility was aware that a disobedient attitude would lead to their deposition and possibly even to Judaea being turned into a Roman province. There was thus no other choice but to conform to the demand imposed by Cassius.

4.3 Herod's promotion

Cassius must have been pleased to find Judaea's ruling elite collaborative when it came to the implementation of his unpopular measure. In particular the short time needed by Herod to raise his portion of the tax will have engendered satisfaction. Perhaps motivated by this achievement, Herod was eventually awarded with an administrative post in the province of Syria by Cassius and Staius Murcus.⁴⁷ Despite the fact that our only two relevant sources provide us with contradictory details about this official position, we can establish with a substantial degree of certainty that the view put forward by Josephus in his *Jewish Antiquities* according to which Herod was appointed as στρατηγός of Coele Syria with a fleet and an army consisting of cavalry and infantry under his command is most plausible.⁴⁸ The suggestion made in the *Jewish War* according to which Herod had been made ἐπιμελητής (governor) of the whole of Syria (Συρίας ἀπάσης) is rather

⁴⁷ L. Staius Murcus was the proconsul who had been given a command over Syria in 44 and became involved in the war against Caecilius Bassus. After Cassius had ended the conflict and incorporated the armies among his own forces, Staius Murcus was retained in his position in Syria, on which see Broughton (1952) 349.

⁴⁸ Josephus, *AJ* 14.280. Similar view with similar argumentation by Otto (1913) 19; Schalit (1969) 48 and 48 n.168; Smallwood (1976) 47; Baumann (1983) 121 and 121 n.24. Cf. Kokkinos (1998) 224 n.64, who claims without argumentation that Herod had been made ἐπιμελητής as claimed by *BJ* 1.225.

incredible.⁴⁹ Ever since Cassius had assumed a supreme position of power in the Levant, a Roman governor had been in charge of Syria. Throughout most of 43, this role was assumed by Cassius and Murcus,⁵⁰ but towards the end of the year when Cassius made his way to Asia Minor for the forthcoming war against Antony and Octavian, a nephew of Cassius is said to have been left in Syria with one legion.⁵¹ In other words, there is no point of time thinkable on which Herod could have been appointed as ἐπιμελητής over Syria. It is much more plausible that he was confirmed in his position as στρατηγός of Coele Syria (probably to be identified with the Decapolis in this case), as the *Jewish Antiquities* report. As we saw above, Herod had already been made στρατηγός of Coele Syria by Sextus Caesar in 47. The appointment by Cassius in 43 was probably nothing but an endorsement of that earlier position. However, in 47 Herod was also given control over the city of Samaria. Although there is no evidence for Herod actually being confirmed in his rule over that place, it is at least evident that sometime in 43 he was still in control over Samaria; Josephus mentions him in relation to the renovation of that city and the mending of internal disputes there in that year.⁵² What duties Herod was asked to fulfil as στρατηγός is not entirely clear. Since

⁴⁹ Josephus, *BJ* 1.225. The Greek term ἐπιμελητής has been used in antiquity both in a general, non-official sense to denote any type of person who was in charge of something (s.v. ἐπιμελητής in *LSJ*), and in a technical way to refer to a wide range of officials in Greece, Asia Minor and Egypt. For all these different uses, see Oehler (1909). The term has also been employed as a translation of the Latin term *curator*, which was itself used in a technical and un-official sense to signify a wide range of positions, on which see Kornemann (1901) and Mason (1974) 46-47, s.v. ἐπιμελητής. Not in all instances of the word in Josephus' corpus, the exact meaning of the word is clear, but ἐπιμελητής has been used in at least two instances to denote in a non-technical sense the governor of a province (*AJ* 17.6; 18.89) as Mason o.c. has demonstrated. Since according to Josephus *BJ* 1.225 Cassius put infantry and cavalry at Herod's disposal, it is very likely that also in this case ἐπιμελητής should be understood to mean "governor of a province".

⁵⁰ On Staius Murcus' proconsulship of Syria in 43, see Broughton (1952) 349.

⁵¹ Appian, *BCiv.* 4.63: "Cassius left his nephew in Syria with one legion..." ("αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ Κάσσιος τὸν μὲν ἀδελφιδοῦν ἐν Συρίᾳ μεθ' ἑνὸς τέλους ἐπέλιπε..."). The name of this nephew appears to be unknown.

⁵² Josephus, *AJ* 14.284; *BJ* 1.229. Smallwood (1976) 45 n.4 has already pointed to these passages as evidence for Herod's appointment as στρατηγός over Samaria in addition to Coele Syria in 47 by Sextus Caesar.

Herod is said to have had an army, cavalry and a navy under his authority, he functioned at least as a military commander in Coele Syria.⁵³

Yet, whatever was the exact position given to Herod, both in the *Jewish War* and in the *Jewish Antiquities*, Cassius is also said to have promised the kingship over Judaea to Herod.⁵⁴ Otto has convincingly rejected this suggestion on the basis that it would only have been made sometime in the first half of 43 when Antipater was still alive.⁵⁵

4.4 Internal conflicts and Cassius

At some point when Cassius was engaged in the war against Dolabella in the summer of 43, a conflict erupted between Malichus and Antipater. The dispute escalated and Malichus eventually managed to put his enemy to death.⁵⁶ Not surprisingly, Herod wished to take vengeance on Malichus for the cruel act inflicted upon his father, but Josephus informs us that he first asked Cassius' consent. It was only after Cassius had given permission to avenge Antipater's death that Herod had Malichus pay the penalty for his deed by executing him.⁵⁷ Whether or not Herod was obliged to ask Cassius permission, he did at least feel compelled to secure Roman consent. This intervention into an internal affair shows how dependent Judaea had become upon Rome and its representatives in the East.

⁵³ Josephus, *AJ* 14.280. Cf. *BJ* 1.225, which does not mention the navy. Mason (1974) 156 clarifies that the term στρατηγός has often been used to denote a military commander. Shatzman (1991) 143 has suggested that this fleet was for the Sea of Galilee – a possibility that is not to be excluded.

⁵⁴ Josephus, *AJ* 14.280; *BJ* 1.225.

⁵⁵ Otto (1913) 19-20.

⁵⁶ Josephus, *AJ* 14.281-283; *BJ* 1.226.

⁵⁷ Josephus, *AJ* 14.283-293; *BJ* 1.227-235.

Conclusion

On the whole, five examples of political interaction between Rome and Judaea have been attested in the source material for the period between 44 and 42 BC: firstly, the Judean troops sent by Antipater together with Herod and Phasael to fight against Caecilius Bassus; secondly, the imposition of tribute of 700 talents by Cassius upon Judaea; thirdly, the enslavement of cities by Cassius; fourthly, the rewards for Herod as a result of the collection of the tribute; and fifthly, Herod asking permission from Cassius to avenge Antipater's death. In addition to these examples, it seems that during this whole period, Judaea was obliged to pay a land tax to Rome, which Pompey installed and Caesar changed. All these examples demonstrate on the one hand that the Judaea was involved in Rome's civil war and that efforts were made to show its loyalty to Rome. On the other hand, it can be inferred from these examples of interaction that Rome regarded Judaea to be an extension of its empire. Not only does the fact that all the leading men in Judaea had received their position from Rome shows this, but also Cassius' imposition of a tribute on Judaea resembles the way in which he treated cities in the eastern Roman provinces. Herod was aware of its dependent status and therefore asked Cassius' permission to deal with an internal Judaeian issue.

5 PRINCEDOM OF CHALCIS

For the first few decades after the emergence of the Principedom of Chalcis from the vestiges of the Seleucid empire in southern Syria towards the end of the second century BC, the extant sources do not provide any indication of interstate dealings between the sovereigns of this principality and Rome despite the fact that for this period diplomatic relations with Rome are attested to have been maintained by the neighbouring kingdom Judaea. The earliest political contacts with the Principedom of Chalcis that can be identified are to be dated to the year 64 or 63 when Pompey arrived in the Near East and reorganised the whole region. By that time, the ruler of Chalcis, Ptolemy son of Mennaëus, seems to have controlled the area of the modern Beqā' and the adjoining Lebanon mountain range. Even those fortresses on the Phoenician coast between Tripolis and Byblos may have constituted a part of Ptolemy's dominion. However, in 63 Pompey appears to have ordered the destruction of those maritime strongholds. Whether other areas of Ptolemy's realm were destroyed as well, remains unclear. The prince was at any rate forced to pay one thousand talents as a means to secure his reign, and was permitted to use the titles τετράρχης and ἀρχιερεύς.¹ Radical as these changes may have been for Ptolemy, until the outbreak of the Roman civil war in the year 44, Rome does not seem to have interfered in Ptolemy's position, nor to have made changes in the internal organisation or geographical extent of his principality. How the relationship between the Principedom of Chalcis and Rome developed from the assassination of Caesar until the defeat of the tyrannicides Brutus and Cassius needs to be examined at present.

¹ For details on Pompey's reorganisation, see chapter 1.6.

5.1 Chalcidæan support for Caecilius Bassus

In the previous chapter, we saw that in the period between 46 and 44 during which Caesarean generals attempted to subdue the Pompeian renegade Caecilius Bassus and his armies in Syria, the Caesareans received support from Herod and Phasaël.² Yet, the assistance by kings and princes in the region was not merely rendered to the Caesarean faction. Caecilius Bassus equally received support from Near Eastern rulers. Strabo names Ptolemy, the son of Mennaëus, along with the rulers of the Emisenoi (Ἐμισσηνοί) and a certain Alchaedamnus, reportedly βασιλεύς of a tribe called the Rhambæans, as allies of Caecilius.³ Unfortunately, the extant sources do not provide us with any further details on the way in which Ptolemy demonstrated his alliance with Caecilius. Possibly, an offer of armed assistance had been made, but it is also conceivable that the ruler of Chalcis had supplied Caecilius with military equipment or financial resources. A clear vision on the motivation behind Ptolemy's alleged decision to collaborate with Caecilius is equally marred by the lack of explanations afforded by Strabo and other ancient authors. Nevertheless, scanty indications in our sources seem to suggest that the geopolitical circumstances at this time played a role in Ptolemy's presumed assistance rendered to Caecilius. The period from the mid-50s until the end of the 30s BC was characterised by mutual distrust and even armed conflict between Rome and Parthia. The main battleground of these two powers was the Near East and it is for this reason not surprising that both Rome and Parthia tried to gain influence and secure loyalty from kings, princes, cities and smaller communities in this region. Dio explains that the Parthians had sent an auxiliary force under king Orodes' son Pacorus to assist Caecilius in the year 45, but that these troops had already retreated before the beginning of the winter.⁴ It is not unlikely that

² See chapter 4.1.

³ Strabo, 16.2.10. On the role of the Emisenoi in the revolt, see chapter 6.1.

⁴ Dio, 47.27.2-5.

Pacorus or another Parthian official had put pressure on the prince of Chalcis, the rulers of the Emisenoi and the leader of the Rhambaeans to ally themselves with Caecilius. Although the extant sources do not provide us with any direct evidence for political pressure on these rulers, indications for the presence of Parthian political influence do appear to exist for a well-known place somewhere else in the region: Palmyra. The following passage taken from Appian's *Civil Wars* illustrates how this influence found expression in this city's conduct:

"When Cleopatra had sailed homewards, Antony sent his horsemen to the *polis* Palmyra, not far from the Euphrates, to plunder, accusing them of something insignificant, that they – being on the frontier between the Romans and the Parthians – showed tact to both sides (being merchants, they carry Indian and Arabian goods from the Persians and dispose of them in the territory of the Romans), but in fact he had in his mind to enrich his horsemen. As the Palmyrenes learned about this beforehand and carried their essentials to the other side of the riverbank, preparing themselves with bows – with which they are by nature excellent – in case anyone would attack them, the horsemen, seizing the city empty, turned around, not having met anyone, not having taken anything".⁵

Appian explains that Palmyra was located on the boundary between the Roman and Parthian spheres of influence, and that as a result of this circumstance "it showed tact to both sides". Clearly, the author means that the city had failed to take sides between Rome and Parthia, each of them flanking her on one side.⁶

⁵ Appian, *BCiv.* 5.9: "Ἀποπλευσάσης δὲ τῆς Κλεοπάτρας ἐς τὰ οἰκεῖα, ὁ Ἀντώνιος ἔπεμπε τοὺς ἰππέας Πάλμυρα πόλιν, οὐ μακρὰν οὖσαν ἀπὸ Εὐφράτου, διαρπάσαι, μικρὰ μὲν ἐπικαλῶν αὐτοῖς, ὅτι Ῥωμαίων καὶ Παρθυαίων ὄντες ἐφόριοι ἐς ἑκατέρους ἐπιδεξίως εἶχον (ἔμποροι γὰρ ὄντες κομίζουσι μὲν ἐκ Περσῶν τὰ Ἰνδικὰ ἢ Ἀράβια, διατίθενται δ' ἐν τῇ Ῥωμαίων) ἔργῳ δ' ἐπινοῶν τοὺς ἰππέας περιουσιάζει. Παλμυρηνῶν δὲ προμαθόντων καὶ τὰ ἀναγκαῖα ἐς τὸ πέραν τοῦ ποταμοῦ μετενεγκάντων τε καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς ὄχθης, εἴ τις ἐπιχειροίη σκευασαμένων τόξοις, πρὸς ἃ πεφύκασιν ἐξαιρέτως, οἱ ἰππῆες τὴν πόλιν κενὴν καταλαβόντες ὑπέστρεψαν, οὔτε ἐς χεῖρας ἐλθόντες οὔτε τι λαβόντες" (transl. *Penguin*). A critical assessment of this passage can be found in Hekster / Kaizer (2004), who show "how contemporary opinions and events helped to shape Appian's description of Antony's raid on Palmyra in 41 BC" (o.c. p. 80).

⁶ That Palmyra was situated on the boundary of the Roman and Parthian spheres of influence is also documented by Pliny, *HN* 5.21.88, who says that Palmyra had "a destiny of its own between

Although Appian himself disregards the accusation of Palmyra's wavering loyalty as a triviality and believes instead that Antony's intention to enrich his horsemen had prompted the raid, he does not reject the content of the indictment itself. Palmyra may thus indeed have maintained an indecisive political attitude in 41. It would probably not have had another choice, "being on the frontier between the Romans and the Parthians". Appian's account of the intended raid on Palmyra can thus serve as an indication that Parthia's political influence stretched at least as far as this city in the year 41. There is no reason to assume that in 46 or 45 this situation would have been different. What is more, with the Roman governors engaged in an armed conflict against each other in the northern part of Syria around this time, it would certainly have been possible for the Parthians to expand their political influence by diplomatic means further westwards into territories that came under the dominion of Ptolemy, the prince of Chalcis, Sampsigeramus the ruler of the Emisenoi and Alchaudonius, the leader of the Rhambaeans. If the Parthians did make use of this opportunity, it would not have been difficult for them to compel the three rulers to render aid to the same Roman faction. Although it cannot be established with certainty whether or not the Parthians undertook such actions, it is clear that they had withdrawn their troops from Syria by the beginning of the winter in the year 45. Whether Ptolemy was still engaged in the conflict when Cassius arrived in the beginning of 43 is uncertain.

In any event, by spring that year, Cassius had conciliated all the conflicting parties and gained control of the former troops of Caecilius, Marcius Crispus and Staius Murcus. The acquisition of all the armies in Syria enabled Cassius within several months to secure an absolute position of power in the Roman Near East.

the two mighty empires of the Romans and the Parthians" (*"privata sorte inter duo imperia summa Romanorum Parthorumque"*, LCL transl. adapted). Unfortunately, this passage cannot be used as evidence for Palmyra being located in the border zone in the 40s BC. By the time that Pliny published his *Natural History* (in AD 77), Palmyra was already situated firmly within the bounds of Rome's empire. The text, accordingly, does not give a factual description of Palmyra's geo-political position with regard to Rome and Parthia. Rather, as Will (1985) 266 explains, merely provides a stereotypical description of an oasis in general.

The ineffective invasion of Dolabella proved to be the last obstacle withholding Cassius from supreme authority over Syria.⁷ While the consolidation of his power was still in progress, the flaws of Cassius' superiority became already manifest. In order to maintain the loyalty of the troops on which his position largely depended, enormous funds were vital. For this purpose, financial resources were not only extracted from the cities and local communities in the eastern Roman provinces, but also from some of the kings and dynasts in that part of the world. Cassius imposed for example the payment of 700 talents on Judaea.⁸ Whether Cassius also exacted money from Ptolemy's principality is unknown. For the whole period from the assassination of Caesar until the Battle of Philippi, our extant sources do not give testimony of any further political interaction between Rome and the Princedom of Chalcis.

Conclusion

For the period from 44 until 42, only one example of political interaction between Rome and the Princedom of Chalcis can be identified: support for the renegade Q. Caecilius Bassus. Parthian pressure may have played a role in this case. Certainty unfortunately cannot be attained. How the relations between Rome and the Princedom of Chalcis developed in the period from 42 until 31 will be considered in Part II.B.

⁷ For more details on Cassius' acquisition of the armies in Syria, see chapter 4.2.

⁸ See chapter 4.2.

6 THE EMISENOI

Pompey's administrative reorganisation of the Near East has demonstrated that liability to Roman taxation and to intermittent demands for financial contributions was not necessarily solely confined to cities and communities within Rome's provinces. As part of Pompey's restructuring programme, several kingdoms and principalities in the Levant, albeit formally located beyond Rome's provincial boundaries, were made subject to Roman taxation and occasional requests for pecuniary donations. The best documented example is without doubt the tribute that the newly installed ἑθνάρχης of the Judaeans, Hyrcanus, saw imposed on his principality.¹ More obscure, yet not necessarily less intrusive, were the financial contributions which Ptolemy, the prince of Chalcis, was forced to make.² Further to the north, it was the people of the Emisenoi who might not have escaped the burden of Roman taxation.³ Whether a tax was the price that the Emisenian φύλαρχος Sampsigeramus had to pay in order to secure Roman recognition of his holdings is an issue which our extant source material fails to elucidate.⁴ It is clear, at least, that the possible levy of a Roman tax did not irreparably damage the relationship between the Emisenoi and Rome. On the contrary, the Emisenian φύλαρχος Iamblichus and his father Sampsigeramus turned out to be key supporters of Rome. It appears that the son was among the rulers who in 51 or 50 informed Cicero as proconsul of Cilicia of the Parthian armies that had crossed the Euphrates. When Caesar was engaged in a war against the forces of the Egyptian king Ptolemy XIII in the year 47, Iamblichus joined a coalition of Near Eastern

¹ See chapter 1.7.

² See chapter 1.6.

³ See chapter 1.6.

⁴ Sullivan (1977a) 202 has advanced the idea that the "Romans recognized the holdings of Sampsigeramus in return for tribute".

auxiliary troops who came to Caesar's assistance in Egypt.⁵ Thus, within five years, Iamblichus had demonstrated at least twice that he was a reliable supporter of Rome when it was engaged in a conflict against a foreign power. Whether Iamblichus received any benefactions for his efforts is uncertain. It is in any event evident that in the following seven years, the Emisenoι did not have any opportunity to assist Rome in foreign wars. Following the death of Caesar in 44, Rome plunged once more into a period of civil strife, and foreign expeditions in the eastern Mediterranean were not undertaken until at least the defeat of Brutus and Cassius at Philippi in 42. How did the renewed outbreak of civil war affect the relationship between the Emisenoι and Rome? In what way did Emisenian policies towards Rome, as well as Rome's attitude towards the Emisenoι, develop during these two and a half years?

6.1 Caecilius Bassus and the Emisenian support

In an earlier chapter, we have already seen that the two years prior to Cassius' arrival in Syria around the beginning of 43 were characterised by a war between the Pompeian rebel Caecilius Bassus and troops dispatched by Caesar. One of the factors that may have contributed to the inability of the Caesarean generals to quell the insurgency in Syria is the military support that Caecilius obtained from Parthia and from the dynasts in the region.⁶ Of these neighbouring chieftains, it has already been stated that Ptolemy, the prince of Chalcis, and a certain Alchaedamnus, king of the Rhambaeans, seem to have rendered military aid to Caecilius in this conflict.⁷ However, Strabo informs us that besides those two dynasts, Sampsigeramus and his son Iamblichus, “φυλάρχων of the tribe of the

⁵ Cicero, *Fam.* 15.1.2 says that he received a message from Iamblichus informing him of the crossing of the Euphrates by Parthian cavalry. Our evidence for the support that Iamblichus granted to Caesar in Egypt consists of Josephus, *AJ* 14.129 and *BJ* 1.188.

⁶ See Appian, *BCiv.* 3.78 and 4.59 on the legions of the Caesarean generals.

⁷ See chapter 5.1.

Emisenoi”, were among the allies whom Caecilius had collected in the Near East.⁸ Although further details on the way in which the Emisenian alliance with Caecilius manifested itself are not made explicit in our extant sources, it is not unthinkable for these two rulers to have sent some military personnel to Syria. More obscure remains the motivation behind the alleged decision of the two Emisenian φύλαρχοι to collaborate with Caecilius. Yet, it is not unthinkable that the Parthians had exerted pressure on Sampsigeramus and Iamblichus to ally themselves with Caecilius, in the same way as they may have induced Ptolemy the prince of Chalcis to collaborate with Caecilius.⁹ The period from the mid-50s BC until the end of the 30s BC was characterised by mutual distrust and even armed conflict between Rome and Parthia. The main battleground of these two powers was the Near East and it is for this reason not surprising that both Rome and Parthia tried to gain influence and secure loyalty of the kings, princes, cities and smaller communities in that region. There are, for example, strong indications that the city of Palmyra experienced Parthian pressure in the late 40s BC.¹⁰ Around the middle of this decade, this thrust may have reached as far as the Princedom of Chalcis or the city of Arethusa on the Orontes, which belonged to the rulers of the Emisenoi.¹¹ The revolt of Caecilius Bassus and the gathering of Roman legions in the north of Syria around Apamea would have given the Parthians the opportunity to expand their influence from Palmyra further westwards. It can therefore not be excluded that Parthia had put pressure on the Emisenian rulers,

⁸ Strabo, 16.2.10: “... Σαμψικεράμου καὶ Ἰαμβλίχου... φυλάρχων τοῦ Ἐμισηνῶν ἔθνους”. On Sampsigeramus’ and Iamblichus’ alliance with Caecilius Bassus, see also: Chad (1972) 42-43; Seyrig (1959) 187; Sullivan (1990) 201.

⁹ See chapter 5.1. Sullivan (1977a) 208 has aptly pointed out that “strong persuasion” must have been required for the Emisenoi to support the Pompeian Caecilius, since not much earlier (in 47) they had supported Caesar in Egypt. Yet, how this “strong persuasion” would have become manifest, is not explained by the author.

¹⁰ See chapter 5.1.

¹¹ All the more so, since an undated boundary marker carrying a Latin inscription – AE (1939) no. 180 – indicates that at some point during Rome’s rule over the Near East, the Palmyrene territory bordered the Emisene sphere of influence, as pointed out by Millar (1993) 34. Nothing withholds the possibility that these two administrative entities were already each other’s neighbours in our period of civil war.

the prince of Chalcis and the leader of the Rhambaeans to make a coalition with Caecilius. Dio clarifies that the Parthians themselves had sent an auxiliary force under the king's son Pacorus to support Caecilius in the year 45, but that these troops had already retreated before the beginning of the winter.¹² Whether Sampsigeramus and Iamblichus were still engaged in the conflict when Cassius arrived in the beginning of 43 is uncertain.

At any rate, by the beginning of spring in the year 43, Caecilius and his Caesarean opponents Marcius Crispus and Staius Murcus had ceased hostilities and surrendered their troops to Cassius, who around the same time seems to have gained control over the four legions that a certain legate A. Allienus, who previously seemed to have served under Dolabella, had taken from Egypt.¹³ The acquisition of all the armies in Syria enabled Cassius within several months to secure an absolute position of power in the Roman Near East. Dolabella's attempt to obtain Syria turned out to be the last barrier withholding Cassius from supreme authority over this province.¹⁴ During the following year and a half, Cassius extracted enormous financial resources from the cities and local communities in the eastern Mediterranean, as well as from Judaea, in order to fortify his hegemony and to prepare for the impending war against the triumvirs.¹⁵ Whether the Emisenoi were also coerced to provide Cassius with funds, armed supplies or victuals, is uncertain. Equally opaque is the issue whether the Emisenian rulers granted military assistance in any form to Cassius (or Brutus) at Philippi.

¹² Dio, 47.27.2-5.

¹³ See chapter 4.2. On the position of A. Allienus and his role in the civil war in 44 and 43, see among others Broughton (1952) 352.

¹⁴ See chapter 3.1.

¹⁵ For more details, see chapter 4.2.

Conclusion

For the whole period from the assassination of Caesar until Antony's and Octavian's triumph over Cassius and Brutus, our extant source material, thus, only gives testimony of the support which Sampsigeramus and his son Iamblichus offered to Caecilius Bassus – possibly under Parthian pressure – at some point between the years 46 and 43.

7 MEDIA ATROPATENE

The history of the political relations between Media Atropatene and Rome in the first century BC prior to the age of civil war is, in contrast to most other bilateral connections under discussion here, nearly completely shrouded in mist. The participation of Media Atropatene in the wars fought by Lucullus and Pompey against Mithridates of Pontus and Tigranes of Armenia is sadly the only interstate contact with Rome known to us. Our literary sources refer in this context merely to several armed clashes in which the Atropatenean king Mithridates and his possible successor Darius were involved by taking up arms against Rome.¹ Although it is not unlikely that Media Atropatene paid a price for its hostile stance towards Rome in the same way as Armenia did, nothing of this sort has been attested. What is more, until the year 42, no further political interaction between this kingdom and Rome is recorded. Whether the silence of our sources is a matter of coincidence or a reflection of the modest role that this kingdom played on the political scene of the Near East in the middle of the first century BC is an issue that cannot be easily resolved. It is important for our purposes, however, to consider what the attitude of Media Atropatene was towards Rome in 42 when the discord among Rome's ruling elite intensified and eventually culminated in the Battle of Philippi in the autumn of that year.

7.1 Median mounted bowman at Philippi

In his *Civil Wars* Appian describes how Brutus and Cassius at the Gulf of Melas in Thrace reviewed the troops that constituted their army in the run-up to the Battle

¹ For an overview of these sources, see chapter 1.5.

of Philippi. The two tyrannicides would have had nineteen Roman legions under their command, as well as a wide range of auxiliary troops, of which the military function and ethnic origin are specified in the following passage:

“Brutus had 4,000 Celtic and Lusitanian horse, besides 2,000 Thracian and Illyrian, Parthian and Thessalian. Cassius had 2,000 Iberian and Celtic horse and 4,000 mounted bowmen, Arabs, Medes, and Parthians. The allied kings and tetrarchs of the Galatians followed him, leading a large additional force of foot-soldiers and about 5,000 horse”.²

The precise ethnic background of the Medes who along with Arabs and Parthians mentioned in this text comprised the mounted archers cannot be reconstructed. It is, however, not unthinkable that these Median bowmen originated from Media Atropatene. In that case, the question arises why Atropatenean forces were present at Philippi. Since none of our extant sources shed light on this issue, a possible explanation remains hypothetical. It is nevertheless not entirely groundless to state that Parthian pressure may have accounted for the military support offered to Brutus and Cassius. Media Atropatene was located immediately north of Parthia and due to this geographical position, Parthia had the opportunity to coerce the Atropateneans to provide mounted bowmen to the tyrannicides. In what way exactly these horsemen would have supported Brutus and Cassius remains unfortunately opaque. It is at any rate clear that the

² Appian *BCiv.* 4.88: “ἵππες δὲ ἦσαν Βρούτῳ μὲν Κελτοὶ καὶ Λυσιτανοὶ τετρακισχίλιοι καὶ Θράκες καὶ Ἰλλυριοὶ Παρθηνοὶ καὶ Θεσσαλοὶ δισχίλιοι, Κασσίῳ δὲ Ἰβηρὲς τε καὶ Κελτοὶ δισχίλιοι καὶ ἰπποτοξόται Ἀραβὲς τε καὶ Μῆδοι καὶ Παρθηναῖοι τετρακισχίλιοι. Σύμμαχοι δὲ εἶποντο βασιλεῖς καὶ τετράρχαι Γαλατῶν τῶν ἐν Ἀσίᾳ, πεζὸν τε ἄγοντες πολὺν ἄλλον καὶ ἵππεας ὑπὲρ πεντακισχιλίου”. Cf. Brunt (1971) 485-488, who has convincingly demonstrated that there were in all likelihood 17 legions fighting on the Republican side at Philippi, and not 19 legions as reported by Appian in this passage and in *BCiv.* 4.108. Brunt believes that Appian had included in the number the two legions under L. Staius Murcus, proconsul in Syria, and an officer called Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus. Although these two commanders were allied to Cassius and Brutus, they were engaged in the Adriatic and did accordingly not partake in the Battle of Philippi with their troops.

Atropatenean assistance did not manage to change the outcome of the Battle of Philippi.

The text also demonstrates that Cassius had Iberian cavalry at his disposal before the final clash with the triumvirs. Why these horsemen from Iberia were present is unclear; any potential explanation remains highly speculative. Their participation here forms at least the first of two occasions that they are known to have been in contact with Rome during our period of civil war.

Conclusion

The political interaction between Rome and Media Atropatene in the period from the eruption of civil war in 44 until the fall of Cassius and Brutus in 42 was thus, as far as our extant source material is concerned, limited to the supply of Atropatenean cavalry to the tyrannicides for the confrontation against Antony and Octavian. No other contact is known to have taken place in the period under discussion. How the relations between the Romans and Atropateneans developed after Philippi, is an issue to be discussed further below. Whether the assistance rendered to the defeated faction had any consequences for Media Atropatene, is an issue that will also be examined in a later chapter.

PART II.B

42-31 BC

8 PARTHIA

As my analysis in Part II.A has shown, Caesar's assassination and the subsequent outbreak of civil war had an enormous impact on the political dealings between Rome and Parthia up till the Battle of Philippi. The murder and ensuing upheaval forced a far-advanced plan for a military campaign against Parthia to be put on hold.¹ Rome's leading politicians were too much engaged in their own political conflicts to see the planned expedition materialise. The relations between the two superpowers accordingly advanced in a different direction. With Roman governors involved in factional strife and seeking as much support as possible, Parthia became just like several other Near Eastern kingdoms and principalities a pool from which military resources could be extracted for the internal struggle. We have observed, for example, that in 43 Cassius used Parthian servicemen (possibly mounted archers) in his war against Dolabella in northern Syria, and a year later Parthians also participated in the clash at Philippi against Antony and Octavian. Unlike most other authorities in the Near East, though, Parthia could, thanks to its status as a global power, not be coerced to render assistance. Parthian assistance for the tyrannicides thus reveals that king Orodes was willing to get involved in Rome's domestic struggles. Perhaps, he anticipated that he would be remunerated by Brutus and Cassius in the event of a successful outcome of the war. Yet, with the downfall of the two tyrannicides on the battlefield, any hope of receiving a reward evaporated. What is more, Orodes must have come to the realisation that he had made a bet on the wrong horse and that Antony might be eager to have him bear the consequences of his conduct, while he made his

¹ For details on Caesar's planned campaign against Parthia, see the introduction of chapter 2.

journey through Asia Minor and the Near East in 41.² Unfortunately, it remains unclear whether a penalty was eventually inflicted in view of the absence of evidence. It is very likely that Antony let the Parthian king go free. Had sanctions been imposed, then traces of it would probably have found their way into the extant literary sources which – taken as a whole – provide us with a rather rich picture of Antony's activities in the East in 41. Yet, whatever Antony's initial response to Parthia's involvement in the Battle at Philippi was, peace could not be secured for long. In the year 40, the Parthians launched an invasion and broke the feeble peace that existed between them and the Romans. How the relations between the two superpowers developed from that moment onwards until Actium will be examined in this chapter.

8.1 The Parthian invasion of Syria and Asia Minor

In the winter of 41/40 or the following spring Parthian armies crossed the Euphrates and moved into the province of Syria.³ The forces were headed by Pacorus, the son of king Orodes, and by the Roman deserter Q. Labienus, who at the beginning of 42 had been dispatched to Parthia by Cassius and Brutus to ask for reinforcements for the war against Antony and Octavian.⁴ Upon their arrival in Syria, they first took on the struggle against the legate L. Decidius Saxa, whom Antony had put in charge of Syria a year earlier with an unknown number of troops under his command.⁵ After the defeat of this officer, Labienus and Pacorus

² For more details on Antony's activities in Asia Minor and the Near East in 41, see chapter 9.1 and 9.2.

³ For modern narratives and analyses of the Parthian invasion, see: Günther (1922) 39-50; Debevoise (1938) 108-120; Magie (1950) 430-432; Sherwin-White (1984) 302-305; Pelling (1988) 193-194, 197-198; Sullivan (1990) 311-312; Lerouge (2007) 85-86.

⁴ Dio, 48.24.3-8; Plutarch, *Ant.* 28.1; 30.1; Velleius, 2.78.1; Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.9; Justin, 42.4.7; Livy, *Per.* 127; Appian, *BCiv.* 5.65; Florus, 2.19.4. On Labienus' embassy to Parthia, see chapter 2.2.

⁵ Dio, 48.24.3, 48.25.2-4; Florus, 2.19.4-5; Livy, *Per.* 127. Cf. Tarn (1932) 77-78; Sherwin-White (1984) 302; Freyburger / Roddaz (1994) cxii, 82 n.220, who all seem to hold it for certain that Decidius Saxa commanded two legions in Syria on the eve of the Parthian invasion. The evidence, however, does

split into two forces. The former turned westwards and continued his march across Asia Minor via Lydia and Caria to the Ionian west coast, gaining support from Roman legions that formerly served under Cassius along the route.⁶ Pacorus, on the other hand, marched to the south from Syria, conquering the Phoenician coastal cities, with the exception of Tyre, and invading Judaea, where he deposed the Roman backed ἑθνάρχης Hyrcanus and installed Antigonus as king instead.⁷ Never before had Parthian armies thrust so far to the west as in the first year of their military expedition – an achievement that found expression in the coinage of Labienus⁸ and, possibly, also of Pacorus.⁹

not allow for such a precise reconstruction of the number of troops stationed in the Levant at that time. Our extant sources can at most inform us about the amount of troops that came into Antony's possession in the aftermath of Philippi. According to Appian, *BCiv.* 5.3, Antony held the authority over six legions and 10,000 horsemen at that moment, and received a further two legions from Octavian in exchange of the troops that he had left behind in Italy. Dio, 48.2.3 is less precise, but at least mentions Antony's deal with Octavian. How Antony distributed these troops over the eastern Mediterranean towards the end of 42 and throughout 41 prior to the Parthian attack can, unfortunately, not be disclosed on the basis of our source material, as Brunt (1971) 497 has already demonstrated. That Sherwin-White and Freyburger / Roddaz, thus, do not refer to any ancient evidence to support their view is not surprising. Tarn is the only one among them who has made an attempt to substantiate his opinion. He has founded his claim on the assumption that L. Marcus Censorinus, the proconsul of Macedonia, held six legions under his command in 41 and 40. This statement is in itself, however, highly speculative; it is based on the postulation that the army that Antony would have recalled in the lead-up to the Treaty of Brundisium (as stated by Appian, *BCiv.* 5.58) consisted of six legions – a number inferred from the impossibility to identify the location of six of the twenty-two legions that Antony according to Tarn (1932) 76 possessed following the agreement reached at Brundisium. For more details on L. Decidius Saxa, see among others Münzer (1901); Syme (1937) = (1979).

⁶ Dio, 48.25.2; 48.26.3-4; Plutarch, *Ant.* 30.1; Strabo, 12.8.9; 14.2.24; Appian, *Syr.* 51. That Labienus marched with his troops as far as the Anatolian southwest littoral is proven by two letters addressed to the city of Mylasa in Caria (Sherk, *RDGE* nos. 59-60 = *I. Mylasa* 601-602) which make mention of the hardship that this place endured as a result of the invasion led by Labienus. The earliest of these letters was dispatched by an unknown Roman magistrate at some point after 39 and the later one by Octavian in 31 after the Battle of Actium.

⁷ Dio, 48.26.1-2. On the change of rule in Judaea, see chapter 10.4.

⁸ Labienus has issued *aurei* and *denarii* (Grueber, *CRRBM* II.500; Crawford (1974) 529 no. 524) which depict on the obverse his bust along with the legend "Q LABIENVVS PARTHICVS IMP", and on the reverse a horse with bow-case and quiver. The imagery on the reverse clearly functions as a metaphor for the military success accomplished by Labienus in Parthian service, as the Parthians were known for their cavalry and archers. The title *imperator* was usually conferred by Roman soldiers upon their general after a victory on the battlefield, and its appearance on coinage here demonstrates that Labienus liked to pride himself on his military achievements. How the word *Parthicus* is to be understood, remains unfortunately unclear. Strabo, 14.2.24 believes that Labienus designated himself as "Parthian *imperator*" ("Παρθικός αὐτοκράτωρ") – an interpretation that has

The invasion did not escape notice on the Roman side. Antony was informed about the Parthian incursion while he was in Egypt with Cleopatra, where he had stayed during the winter from 41 to 40. In response to the rapid Parthian military advance, Antony hastened to Phoenicia to prepare for the counterattack. However, he abandoned this plan when he perceived that Octavian had defeated his brother L. Antonius in the battle of Perusia.¹⁰ With his forces Antony proceeded to Italy, laid siege to Brundisium and seized territory in southern Italy. As a result of these actions, Octavian moved southwards with his army and a new civil war seemed inevitable. Reluctance among the troops to take any sides forced Octavian and Antony, however, to negotiate a compromise; the so-called Pact of Brundisium was the outcome.¹¹ After Antony had attended to this

received the consent of Münzer (1925) 259. Yet, as Timpe (1962) 118 n.90 has already demonstrated by drawing attention to Dio, 48.39.3, Labienus does not seem to have commanded any Parthian troops directly when he made his march westwards, and it is in this light highly unlikely that he called himself “Parthian *imperator*”. Moreover, Wallmann (1989) 232 has pointed out that Strabo’s reference to Labienus as “Parthian *imperator*” is to be understood in a satirical way in the context of the entire passage. He also explains why Plutarch, *Ant.* 28.1 cannot be used as evidence for condoning Strabo’s explanation. A different interpretation of the title *Parthicus imperator* has been provided by Dio, 48.26.5, who believes that Labienus “called himself both *imperator* and *Parthicus*” (“αὐτοκράτορά τε αὐτὸν καὶ Παρθικόν (...) ὠνόμαζεν”). In this sense, Παρθικὸς is thus not used as an adjective, but as a *cognomen ex virtute*, which was awarded to a victorious commander in the field, and referred to the people that he had defeated in battle. Labienus, however, did not crush the Parthians; on the contrary, he fought for the Parthians against fellow Romans. Although Dio is aware of this, he does not explain why Labienus would have diverted from the traditional usage of *cognomina ex virtute*. Nonetheless, some scholars agree with Dio’s interpretation, most notably Crawford (1974) 529. A more plausible explanation for the appearance of the term *Parthicus* on Labienus’ *aurei* and *denarii* is provided by Wallmann (1989) 233, who points out that during the Late Republic, the term *Parthicus* (or any other ethnic) could also mean “friend of the Parthians” in the same way as the name Atticus, could refer to “friend of Athens”. This view has been subscribed to by Freyburger / Roddaz (1994) 84 n.247; Grueber, *CRRBM* II.500. For further references to the modern debate regarding the meaning of the title *Parthicus imperator*, see Wallmann (1989) 232-234; Noé (1997) 423-426 and Curran (2007) 47-51.

⁹ Pacorus is generally thought to have been depicted on some drachms and bronze coins from Parthia that portray the bust of a beardless prince. On those issues, the depicted ruler is crowned by a Nike with a wreath – a representation that may reflect Pacorus’ success on the battlefield in 40. For more detailed description of the coins in question, see among others Wroth (1964) xxxvii, 97-98 and Sellwood (1971) 143-144.

¹⁰ Plutarch, *Ant.*, 30.1-2; Dio, 48.27.3-5. For more details and background on the Perusine War, see among others Syme (1939) 208-213; Pelling (1996) 14-17.

¹¹ Appian, *BCiv.* 5.65; Dio, 48.28.4; Velleius, 2.76.3; Plutarch, *Ant.* 30.6. On the Pact of Brundisium, see Syme (1939) 216-217; Buchheim (1960) 35-39; Huzar (1978) 136-140.

business, he appointed P. Ventidius Bassus as legate with *imperium pro consule* to the command of the war against the Parthian invaders.¹² Eventually, Ventidius succeeded in this task as Labienus fell on the battlefield in 39,¹³ followed a year later by the death of Pacorus in Syria near Gindarus.¹⁴ The loss of these two generals marked the end of the Parthian advance. Ventidius and his troops forced the Parthian armies to retreat to their own territories beyond the Euphrates – a task which was completed in 38.¹⁵

With a brief historical outline provided of the Parthian invasion and Roman counter-attack, the question ought to be asked why the Parthians decided on an invasion of Syria and Asia Minor, and why in 41/40. At first glance, the moment at which their assault began seems to be peculiar. In the course of 42, Brutus and Cassius had gathered almost all their forces for the clash with Antony and Octavian, leaving only one legion behind in Syria.¹⁶ With the Near East and Asia Minor almost entirely destitute of Roman forces at that time, the Parthians had a marvellous opportunity to make an incursion into the Levant and Anatolia.¹⁷ Further examination reveals, however, that the situation under which the Parthian king eventually initiated the attack in 41/40 was not necessarily less advantageous than in 42. Certainly, in the aftermath of Philippi Antony had come into possession of eight legions (two of which lent to him by Octavian) and 10,000 horsemen, but it remains opaque where exactly in the eastern Mediterranean these forces were stationed.¹⁸ Whether Antony had located more troops in Syria in 41

¹² Appian, *BCiv.* 5.65; Dio, 48.39.2; Plutarch, *Ant.* 33.1. On the title of Ventidius, see Broughton (1952) 388.

¹³ Dio, 48.39-40; Plutarch, *Ant.* 33.4; Florus, 2.19.5; Gellius, *NA* 15.4.3-4; Livy, *Per.* 127.

¹⁴ Dio, 49.20.1-4; Justin, *Epit.* 42.4.7-10; Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.9; Florus, 2.19.6; Velleius, 2.78.1. For more details on the battle near Gindarus, see among others Debevoise (1938) 117-118; Günther (1922) 47-48; Sherwin-White (1984) 304-305; Reinhold (1988) 48-50.

¹⁵ Dio, 48.39-40, 49.20; Velleius, 2.78.1; Plutarch, *Ant.* 34.1-2; Strabo, 16.2.8.

¹⁶ Appian, *BCiv.* 4.63.

¹⁷ For this reason, both Günther (1922) 41 and Sherwin-White (1984) 302 maintain that Orodes failed to take his best chance of success.

¹⁸ Appian, *BCiv.* 5.3; Dio, 48.2.3.

than Cassius had done prior to his move to Greece in 42 is therefore doubtful. Moreover, Appian explains that when Antony went to Egypt towards the end of 41, he had discharged the troops for the winter. It is very well possible that those forces had not yet been entirely mobilised at the moment of the Parthian incursion into Syria.¹⁹ In addition, some of Antony's soldiers are said to have been engaged in a mutiny.²⁰ The circumstances for an attack in 41/40 seem thus to have been very encouraging, not necessarily less so than in 42.

Favourable as the state of affairs in all likelihood was, it remains uncertain to what extent any of those aforementioned conditions played a role in the decision of the Parthian ruler to attack in the winter of 41/40 or the following spring. Although Dio has us believe that information of the alleged rebellion provided by Labienus to the Parthians formed one of the arguments by which Orodes was convinced to begin his invasion while Antony still resided in Egypt and Octavian was engaged in Italy,²¹ other considerations may have been taken into account as well.²² Appian informs us, for example, that a raid undertaken by Antony in 41 on the city of Palmyra, which was allegedly located on the boundary

¹⁹ Appian, *BCiv.* 5.10.

²⁰ Dio, 48.24.7. Cf. Florus 2.19.3, who is less detailed, but makes mention of discords (*discordiae*) among the Romans prior to the invasion. He implies that these conflicts provided the Parthians with a suitable opportunity to launch an attack.

²¹ Dio, 48.24.6-48.25.1.

²² Cf. Debevoise (1938) 104, whose view according to which "a transference of activity to the eastern part of the empire" may have prevented the Parthians from embarking on a grand-scale invasion into Syria earlier in the 40s BC, is entirely groundless. The author has based his opinion on the presumed halt in the production of tetradrachms at the mint of Seleucia on the Tigris between 52 and 40/39. The alleged interruption, however, does not necessarily indicate a greater military activity in the eastern part of the Parthian kingdom. A more convincing explanation for the absence of tetradrachms for those years has been brought forward by McDowell (1935) 184, 221-222, who in his study to the coinage issued at Seleucia on the Tigris has pointed to the existence of so-called 'autonomous' coins dated to the years between 42/41 and 39/38. On the ground of these coins, he has argued that at least during the late 40s and early 30s BC, Seleucia on the Tigris seems to have been under the authority of a local political faction and no longer under the control of Orodes. Possibly, the king lost his power over Seleucia on the Tigris already several years before the first known 'autonomous' coin at this city was struck. The absence of the tetradrachms can thus be explained better with relation to developments in the political circumstances at Seleucia on the Tigris than with military activities in the eastern end of the Parthian kingdom. On Orodes' coinage, see Wroth (1964) 68-96; Sellwood (1971) 118-142.

of Rome's and Parthia's spheres of influence, may have triggered the offensive.²³ Futile a reason as the triumvir's assault on this city at first sight appears to be for beginning Parthia's invasion into Roman territory, it should definitely not be ruled out as an important prompt for the incursion. Appian explains that Palmyra was located in the border region between Rome's and Parthia's domains. The attack on this city will thus in all likelihood not have met with much approval on the Parthian side. On the contrary, Orodes probably regarded Rome's intervention as a serious act of aggression against a city over which he might have claimed to exert control. The assault on Palmyra may thus very well in combination with the supposed mutiny among the Roman troops left behind in the eastern Mediterranean for the winter of 41/40 have induced the Parthian king to launch his invasion. What is more, preparations for a Roman campaign against Parthia are said already to have been in progress by 41.²⁴ The prevention of such an attack, accordingly, can have served as an important prompt for the battle in 41/40 as well.²⁵

To explain the military offensive against Rome entirely as an act of retaliation and as a pre-emptive measure, however, would go too far. Other factors must have been in play as well when the decision was made to initiate a large-scale incursion. Unfortunately, it proves to be difficult to identify those driving forces with certainty. Not only is the lack of indications provided by our ancient authors to be blamed for that, but also our ignorance with regard to the military aims of the expedition. It so happens that on the basis of the extant source material, it cannot be said for how long the Parthians were planning to retain control over their territorial gains in the Near East and Asia Minor, nor whether Labienus and Pacorus would have continued their military advancement, had the Roman commander Ventidius not initiated a counter-attack. Despite those

²³ Appian, *BCiv.* 5.9-10. For further discussion and references on Antony's raid on Palmyra, see chapter 5.1 (with references).

²⁴ Plutarch, *Ant.* 25.1.

²⁵ The same suggestion has been made by Schlude (2012) 23.

uncertainties, though, Wolski has argued with apparent confidence that the Parthians aimed at the conquest of Syria, Asia Minor, Palestine and possibly also Egypt.²⁶ The argument that he uses to substantiate his view is – not surprisingly – unconvincing.²⁷ Wolski brings up a passage in Tacitus' *Annals* that makes mention of king Artabanus (I)/II (c. AD 11-37) referring in the context of his claim on the treasure left by the former Parthian king Vonones in Syria and Cilicia to "the old boundaries of the Persians and Macedonians, and to his intention of seizing what was held first by Cyrus and afterwards by Alexander".²⁸ Although it is not to be denied that the latter two rulers exerted control over Asia Minor during their respective reigns (and Alexander even over Egypt), the supposed objective of Artabanus to extend his realm with the lands that once belonged to those two kings does not prove that Orodes fostered the same intention more than half a century earlier. The only region west of the Euphrates on which the king is attested to have set his eye was Syria. As we saw above, Orodes tried already in 48 to get hold of it by stipulating its abandonment by Pompey as condition for military assistance in the civil war against Caesar.²⁹ Although this attempt failed, it is very likely that the Parthian king still cherished the hope to add Syria to his realm in the year 40. The annexation of the northern part of the Levant would give the Parthians not only control over the entire trade route from the Far East to the

²⁶ Wolski (1976a) 204-205; Wolski (1993) 136; Debevoise (1938) 108-119; Sullivan (1990) 311-312. The author claims that Crassus' campaign of 53 most likely contributed to the desire of Orodes and his successors to incorporate all those territories into their realm. He also argues that the Parthian rulers justified this imperialistic policy by harking back to the Achaemenid dynasty and by presenting themselves as successors of this great line of kings. Wolski (1966) 73-74; Wolski (1976a) 202-206; Wolski (1976b) 399-402; Wolski (1982-1984) 166; Wolski (1993) 97-121 all argue that the adoption of this Achaemenid programme by the Arsacids was not a sudden event, but a process that seems to have begun at the end of the second century BC. Cf. Neusner (1963) 47; Frye (1984) 228; Shayegan (2011) Ch.3, who are more sceptical about the adoption of an Achaemenid programme. See also Shayegan (2011) *passim* for references to the debate whether the Sasanian or Arsacid rulers were the first to represent themselves as descendants of the Achaemenids.

²⁷ Cf. Dabrowa (1986) 121, who claims that the Parthians had the intention to conquer the Roman territories in Anatolia and in Syria, but unlike Wolski fails to provide any evidence for his view.

²⁸ Tacitus, *Ann.* 6.31.1: "*veteres Persarum ac Macedonum terminos, seque invasurum possessa Cyro et post Alexandro... iacebat*" (LCL transl. adapted).

²⁹ See chapter 2.1.

Mediterranean Sea,³⁰ it would also leave the Parthians less vulnerable against Roman attacks launched from Syria.³¹ For these purposes, the incorporation of the Anatolian coastal regions would not have been necessary. It is thus very unlikely that the Parthians actually aimed for the annexation of Asia Minor, the entire Levant and Egypt. Other considerations will probably have governed the decision to march along the south littoral of Asia Minor as far as the Ionian coast. Possibly the sweeping advancement was nothing more than a mere demonstration of power to the Romans to warn them for repercussions if they ever again dared to launch an attack on Parthia. Yet, whatever had prompted the march into Anatolia, it is clear that the Romans were the more successful party in the end, and managed to inflict devastating defeats upon the Parthians.

8.2 Antony's Parthian campaign

Decisive as Rome's victory over the Parthian troops at Gindarus was, the expulsion of the enemy from Syria did not prove to be the beginning of a long-term concord between the two superpowers. Less than two years after the crucial battle, Antony gathered his forces and launched a full-sized military expedition against Parthia. How the relations between the two former enemies developed in the intermediate period is unfortunately obscure. The historian Florus (living in the second century AD) has claimed that following the end of the Parthian invasion in 38 "friendship was renewed [between Rome and Parthia, ed.] on the basis of mutual respect, and a treaty actually concluded with the king by Antony himself".³² Resolute as Florus is about the realisation of this compact, though, it is

³⁰ Wolski (1976a) 202-203 and Wolski (1976b) 396-402 explain that the Arsacid rulers after the conquest of Mesopotamia in the second century BC began to have a desire to annex Syria because of its importance for the trade with Asia.

³¹ This argument for the alleged Parthian intention to annex Syria has been mentioned by Schlude (2012) 13, 15, 22-23 as well.

³² Florus, 2.20.1: "*pari rursus reverentia integrata amicitia, et quidem ab ipso foedus Antonio cum rege percussum*".

difficult – if not impossible – to lend credence to his report. The hostilities between Rome and Parthia had only just terminated, and Antony was already in the process of making arrangements for a military offensive against Parthia.³³ Furthermore, would the renewal of friendship and the conclusion of a treaty not have found their way to other sources, in the same way as previous agreements with Parthia, negotiated by Sulla, Lucullus and Pompey respectively have been mentioned in a range of historical accounts?³⁴ Florus' version of the relations between Rome and Parthia in the aftermath of the Parthian invasion can thus fairly safely be rejected. If this conclusion is accurate, the question needs to be asked how the idea of Antony renewing friendship and concluding a treaty with the Parthian king has crept into Florus' work. Although an unambiguous answer cannot be provided, one of our ancient sources provides us with some useful indications. Dio explains that in 38, Antony made a treaty (συνθήκη) with the Commagenian king Antiochus, in order to stop the hostilities that had erupted between them after the Battle of Gindarus.³⁵ This agreement was reached while Parthian fugitives from the war against Rome enjoyed asylum in the Commagenian capital Samosata.³⁶ Although the treaty does, as far as we know at least, not address the issue of the Parthian escapees, it is possible that the source to which Florus' *Epitome of Roman History* goes back misinterpreted the situation that unfolded in the Levant after Parthia's defeat in 38, and thought that Antony made an agreement with the Parthian king concerning these fugitives rather than with the ruler from Commagene.³⁷

³³ Plutarch, *Ant.* 25.1 has us believe that Antony was already getting ready for this enterprise in 41 when he travelled through Asia Minor and the Near East.

³⁴ On the diplomatic contacts between Sulla, Lucullus and Pompey on the one hand and the Parthians on the other hand, see Keaveney (1981).

³⁵ Dio, 49.22.1. On the treaty that Antony made with Antiochus, see chapter 16.2.

³⁶ Dio, 49.20.3.

³⁷ For the realisation of the *Epitome of Roman History*, Florus depended heavily on Livy's work. Although it remains unclear on what source Florus drew for his account of the friendship and the treaty concluded with the Parthian king (2.20.1), provided that this passage is inaccurate, it is highly unlikely that he relied in this particular context on Livy, who lived contemporaneous to the events. On the sources of Florus' *Epitome of Roman History*, see Bessone (1996) 197-221.

Yet, whatever source formed the basis of the view according to which friendship and a treaty were concluded with Parthia, the relations upheld by Rome and Parthia towards one another remained hostile (as we have seen above). Even the emergence of Phraates IV, one of Orodes' sons, as new ruler in the aftermath of the invasion in 38 failed to change the relations in a positive way. At some point in the spring of 36, Antony set out from Syria and launched his military campaign.³⁸ Unlike Crassus in 53, he did not take the direct route to Parthia by moving eastwards across the Euphrates at Zeugma into Mesopotamia.³⁹ Instead, he decided to approach Parthia from the north by way of Armenia and Media Atropatene, since the mountainous lands in these kingdoms would provide his legions with protection against the Parthian cavalry.⁴⁰ For this reason, he initially moved to Zeugma assuming that via the bridge over the Euphrates into Osrhoene and thence north westwards across the Tigris he would be able to reach Armenia using the shortest route.⁴¹ On arrival at Zeugma, though, Antony discovered that the crossing was strongly defended by the Parthians. Forced by these circumstances to use a detour via Melitene, he eventually arrived in Armenia at some point late in the spring of 36, and assembled all the legions and auxiliary

³⁸ See map 2 and 5 for clarification.

³⁹ Plutarch, *Crass.* 19.3; Florus, 1.46.3-4; Dio, 40.17.3; Cicero, *Div.* 2.22; Velleius, 2.46.4; Livy, *Per.* 106; Orosius, 6.13.2. On Crassus' Parthian campaign of 54-53, see among others Günther (1922) 14-38; Debevoise (1938) 78-93; Marshall (1976) 139-161; Keaveney (1982) 417-426; Sherwin-White (1984) 279-290; Wolski (1993) 128-134; Lerouge (2007) 67-75.

⁴⁰ The protection afforded by the mountain chains of Armenia and Media Atropatene formed one of the arguments by which the Armenian king Artavasdes II is said to have tried in vain to persuade Crassus in 53 to approach Parthia from the north rather than through the plains of Mesopotamia (Plutarch, *Crass.* 19.2-3). Although our literary sources do not explicitly state that these considerations played a role behind the decision of Antony to take the way via Armenia and Atropatene, Dio (49.25.1) does inform us that it was Artavasdes who had suggested to Antony to take this route. In order to convince Antony, it is not unthinkable that the Armenian king used the same arguments as he had used earlier in his (failed) attempt to persuade Crassus.

⁴¹ The shortest route from Syria to Armenia has been worked out by Sherwin-White (1984) 309-311, who has also convincingly demonstrated the fallibility of the version of events described by Dio, 49.25.1 according to which Antony only decided to proceed via Armenia into Media Atropatene after he had checked the suitability of crossing the Euphrates at Zeugma. See also Kromayer (1896) 101 with convincing arguments to refute Dio's version. Cf. Bengtson (1974) 22 and Dabrowa (2006) 346-347, who still deem it possible for Dio's report to be accurate.

forces for the expedition.⁴² Plutarch informs us that Antony had 60,000 legionaries, 10,000 Iberian and Celtic horsemen as well as 30,000 auxiliary forces at his disposal. The Armenian king Artavasdes is said to have supplied him with 6,000 equestrians and 7,000 infantry soldiers.⁴³ Having gathered all these forces, Antony marched to the southeast across the River Araxes into Media Atropatene. The ruler of this kingdom, Artavasdes, had vacated his realm to render aid to his ally, the Parthian king Phraates, who apparently was still in Mesopotamia expecting a Roman advance from the west.⁴⁴ Antony saw his chances and moved further southwards to the fortified city of Phraaspa, which at that point accommodated the wives and children of the Atropatenean king.⁴⁵ Yet, in order to speed up his advance Antony left behind the siege machinery and some of the supplies along

⁴² Dio, 49.25.1; Strabo, 11.13.4; Cf. Plutarch, *Ant.* 37.2-3 who erroneously claims that after Antony had sent Cleopatra to Egypt, “he proceeded through Arabia and Armenia to the place where his forces were assembled, together with those of the allied kings” (“ἐχώρει δι’ Ἀραβίας καὶ Ἀρμενίας, ὅπου συνελθούσης αὐτῷ τῆς δυνάμεως καὶ τῶν συμμάχων βασιλέων”). Pelling (1988) 222 has already correctly pointed out that Antony was in Syria in the winter of 37/36. Plutarch’s statement according to which Antony marched through Arabia can thus safely be rejected. The exact location of the collection of the troops in Armenia is disputed: Carana (Erzerum) in western Armenia and Artaxata in the eastern part of the kingdom have both been mentioned. For a brief overview of the arguments in favour of each place, see Kromayer (1896) 82 and Sherwin-White (1984) 311.

⁴³ Plutarch, *Ant.* 37.3. The number of legions that Antony had at his disposal for the expedition is unclear. Velleius, 2.82.1 opts for thirteen legions. The author of *De viris illustribus*, 85.4 believes that Antony used fifteen legions for his expedition. Justin, *Epit.* 42.5.3 and Florus 2.10.1 both claim sixteen. Livy, *Per.* 130 says that Antony had eighteen legions and 16,000 horsemen. Strabo, 11.14.9 and Plutarch, *Ant.* 37.3 both stated that Artavasdes of Armenia provided Antony with 6,000 horsemen. Cf. Plutarch, *Ant.* 50.2 who says that the Armenian king had supported Antony with 16,000 horsemen.

⁴⁴ Although Dio, 25.2 does not inform us where the Atropatenean king was when Antony invaded his kingdom, it is not unlikely that he was in Mesopotamia near the Euphrates. Dio, 49.25.1 implies that the Parthian troops had assembled on the left bank of the Euphrates in anticipation of the Roman attack.

⁴⁵ Plutarch, *Ant.* 38.2 (Φραάτα); Dio, 49.25.3 (Πραάσπα). Cf. Strabo, 11.13.3 who mentions the siege of a fortress by Antony called Vera (Οὔρεα) – a place that has been identified with Phraaspa. On this identification and its potential problems, see among others Minorsky (1944) 258-262; Scuderi (1984) 83; Sherwin-White (1984) 314 n.42; Syme (1995) 82-83. The exact location of Phraaspa is unknown. Most scholars have placed this fortified place at Takht-i-Sulaiman: Kromayer (1896) 78; Debevoise (1938) 125-126; Scuderi (1984) 83; Syme (1995) 81. Cf. Sherwin-White (1984) 313-314 who rejects the identification of Phraaspa with Takht-i-Sulaiman, because of its “small size”, and thinks that the location of the city that Antony besieged needs to be sought in Myanduab or Saqqiz. Bengtson (1974) 24-30 believes that Phraaspa is to be identified with Maraga.

with two legions under the command of Oppius Statianus.⁴⁶ This choice proved to be fatal for a successful outcome of the campaign. Without proper siege equipment and sufficient provisions, Antony was at a disadvantage in his attempt to capture the city. What is more, the Parthian and Atropatenean enemy routed Statianus along with the two legions under his wings, and Antony saw his prime ally, the Armenian king, withdrawing to his kingdom in the heat of the battle.⁴⁷ All these reverses prompted the triumvir to abort the siege of Phraaspa and to return to Armenia without having set foot into Parthia.⁴⁸ Suffering additional losses on the way back, Antony is said to have drawn up the balances as soon as he had left enemy territory. According to Plutarch, the campaign had ended the lives of 20,000 infantry soldiers and 4,000 horsemen.⁴⁹ Specific as the biographer is, though, the exact amount of troops that had perished cannot be established with certainty because of disagreement between the various ancient accounts.⁵⁰

Obscure as the exact impact of the expedition on Antony's army thus was, it cannot be denied that adverse circumstances had forced the triumvir to end his campaign prematurely before having set foot into Parthia. The Roman advance halted at Phraaspa, and Plutarch and Dio, who provide us with the two main narratives for the siege of this city, discuss in detail how the alleged strategic failures made by Antony and the withdrawal of Armenia's auxiliary forces contributed to the disaster that befell the Romans.⁵¹ With Antony's plans thwarted before Parthia could be reached, the question immediately comes up, what the ultimate military objective of the expedition was. Scholars have come up with a

⁴⁶ Plutarch, *Ant.* 38.2; Dio, 49.25.2-3.

⁴⁷ Plutarch, *Ant.* 38.2-39.1; Dio, 49.25.3-49.26.1.

⁴⁸ Plutarch, *Ant.* 39.1-51.2 and Dio, 49.26.1-49.31.4 provide us with a narrative of the war after the siege of Phraaspa.

⁴⁹ Plutarch, *Ant.* 50.1.

⁵⁰ Velleius, 2.82.2-3 believes that a quarter of the soldiers had succumbed; Florus, 2.20.10 reports that hardly a third of sixteen legions had returned from the expedition. Cf. Livy, *Per.* 130, who speaks of the loss of two legions. Possibly, Livy or his epitomiser only had the two legions in mind that went down with their general, Oppius Statianus. It has already been made clear, however, that Antony also suffered losses when he made his retreat.

⁵¹ Plutarch, *Ant.* 37.4-38.3, 50.2; Dio, 49.25.2-26.1, 49.31.2.

variety of potential options ranging from the complete subjugation of the Parthians, to the mere conquest of Mesopotamia, and the capture of Ecbatana, one of the capitals of the Parthian kingdom.⁵² On the basis of our source material, however, none of the military aims of the campaign can be identified with certainty.

The picture is not much more promising with regard to the political objectives of the enterprise. Certainly, Antony will have been yearning for military or political success to bolster his prestige, especially with Ventidius having earned a triumph for his accomplishments against the Parthian invaders two years earlier.⁵³ Likewise, it cannot be denied, as some of our ancient authors claim, that Antony had aspirations to avenge the Parthian invasion of Syria and Asia Minor, or even the disaster that befell the Romans in 53 at Carrhae.⁵⁴ The alleged attempt of Antony to seek the restoration of the military standards lost during Crassus' campaign, and of the soldiers taken captive on that occasion needs to be understood in that light.⁵⁵ It goes too far, though, to regard the campaign

⁵² Complete subjugation of the Parthians: Kromayer (1896) 90. Mesopotamia: Sherwin-White (1984) 308; Ecbatana: Bengtson (1974) 21; Reinhold (1988) 56. For none of these suggestions support can be found in our extant sources.

⁵³ Dabrowa (2006) 345, 348 claims that the entire expedition was undertaken by Antony merely for propaganda purposes, not with the aim to establish a new political order.

⁵⁴ Justin, *Epit.* 42.5.3; Appian, *BCiv.* 5.65. Cf. Plut. *Ant.* 34.2 and Dio, 49.21.2, who claim that Ventidius had already avenged the loss of Crassus with his successes in 39 and 38. Obviously, this does not mean that Antony regarded it to be his own task as well to take vengeance on the Parthians for the defeat that they had inflicted on Crassus. On the role that the desire to take revenge of the Parthians played in Antony's decision to begin a campaign, see Timpe (1962) 119-126.

⁵⁵ On the eve of the expedition, Antony is said by Plutarch, *Ant.* 37.2 and Dio, 49.24.5 to have offered peace, on the condition that the Parthians abandon the standards and release the detained servicemen. Both authors, however, cast doubt on the sincerity of this offer, and see the proposed deal as part of a strategy to deceive the Parthian king – a view that has found support with Günther (1922) 52. Although I agree with Plutarch and Dio that the offer of peace was not meant to bring about a peace deal, it goes too far to regard the proposed deal as a means to hold off Parthian preparations for war. The enormous preparations for the campaign can hardly have remained hidden for Phraates, especially since one of the ambassadors bringing Antony's plan to the Parthian court was a Parthian noble. Moreover, even if Antony's proposal was sincere – as Buchheim (1960) 78; Timpe (1962) 122; Ziegler (1964) 35 hold as a possibility – then Phraates would probably never have endorsed it. Bengtson (1974) 21; Pelling (1988) 222; Freyburger / Roddaz (1994) cxxxviii and Dabrowa (2006) 345 have already pointed out that the return of the standards

primarily as a punitive expedition for the damage inflicted on the Romans in 53 and during the two-year invasion that had only just come to a halt. Equally lopsided is the view accepted by Freyburger / Roddaz and Dabrowa according to which Antony undertook the campaign mainly to strengthen his own reputation.⁵⁶ For if Antony's central objective was personal gain, would the enterprise not have focused on a fast subjugation of Parthia and the seizure of Parthian cities rather than on a protracted siege of a city in Media Atropatene? It has already been pointed out that the capture of Phraaspa was not a prerequisite from a strategic point of view for a successful campaign against Parthia. Leaving behind a hostile fortress would not necessarily have led to a catastrophe,⁵⁷ as the successful conquest of Pontus by Lucullus in 71 has shown. Lucullus' decision to abstain from an attack on three hostile Pontic cities in that year did not have an adverse outcome on the war.⁵⁸ Antony's persistent effort to take hold of Phraaspa thus illustrates that the campaign of 36 cannot have constituted a sheer quest for personal glory. Other considerations must have been in play as well. Although the lack of evidence makes it impossible to identify exactly what had prompted the

and the release of the Roman captives would mean that Phraates lost face with Parthia's ruling elite, and to see his fragile position further weakened. That the Parthian king was ever to give his consent to the proposal is thus highly unlikely. Antony must have been aware of this (as much as Augustus in the late 20s BC, by the way, who successfully managed to persuade Phraates to exchange the standards for his son, who had been abducted by Tiridates II, a rival to the Parthian throne, and granted to Augustus, on which see Dio, 53.33.1-2, 54.8.1; Suetonius, *Aug.* 21.3. Cf. the official version in *RGDA* 29.2). The offer of peace prior to the outbreak of the war was accordingly in all likelihood not meant to be sincere. Yet, if this is the case, why then did Antony make such a proposal? Wallmann (1989) 262 has convincingly argued that the official proposal of peace was made for propaganda purposes, to represent the decision to go to war in Rome as a justified one. Obviously, this does not mean that Antony did not desire the restoration of the standards and the liberation of the captive soldiers. On the contrary, Plutarch, *Ant.* 40.4 has us believe that at some point during the campaign, Antony made another proposal of peace stipulating the same conditions as before (cf. Dio, 49.27.3-5, who does not mention these prerequisites). The return of the standards and servicemen thus seems to have been an aim that Antony sought to achieve. It was in all likelihood not, though, the main motive for the campaign against Parthia.

⁵⁶ Freyburger / Roddaz (1994) cxxxix; Dabrowa (2006) 345, 348.

⁵⁷ Sherwin-White (1984) 315.

⁵⁸ The three Pontic cities in question are Amisus, Heraclea and Sinope. For more details and references on Lucullus' choice to leave these three Pontic cities behind in 71, and to annex them in the following year only, see Sherwin-White (1984) 172-173, 315.

campaign and what political aims Antony sought to accomplish, it seems most likely that the enterprise was dictated by fear of another Parthian attack on Rome's possessions in Asia Minor and the Near East. The incursions into Syria in the late 50s and the large-scale invasions of Syria and extensive part of Anatolia in the early 30s BC had already exposed the vulnerability of those possessions to Parthian aggression. It is not unthinkable that the campaign of 36 was designed to address that issue by rendering Parthia innocuous to Roman territory in the eastern Mediterranean. In what way Antony envisioned achieving that supposed aim is not entirely clear. Possibly, he anticipated advancing on Parthia's key cities, and to force the king to make an act of surrender. Such a deed would enable him to reinstall Phraates as a king dependent on Rome in the same way as Pompey had done with the subjugated Armenian ruler Tigranes II in 66. Yet, it is also conceivable that the triumvir aimed for regime change. In order to understand that possibility, it is imperative to have a brief look at some of the events that unfolded after Phraates had assumed control at the end of 38. This new king initiated a campaign of terror soon after his accession by assassinating his father, his brothers and a large number of the leading Parthians. The enormous bloodshed induced several members of the elite to flee the kingdom and seek refuge with the Romans.⁵⁹ One of them was a certain Monaeses, who made a promise to Antony "to lead his army and bring most of Parthia over to him without trouble".⁶⁰ Delighted as Antony may have been according to Dio about this offer, Monaeses never rendered any support to Antony. Shortly after his escape from Parthia, Phraates managed to persuade him to return to his kingdom.⁶¹ The king seems to have been alarmed by the territorial guarantees given to Monaeses by Antony.⁶² The expatriate was reportedly not only granted

⁵⁹ Justin, *Epit.* 42.4.10-42.5.2; Plutarch, *Ant.* 37.1; Dio, 49.23.3-5.

⁶⁰ Dio, 49.24.2: "τῆς... στρατείας ἡγήσεσθαι καὶ τὰ πλείω τῆς Παρθίας ἀκονιτὶ προσποιήσειν...". Cf. Plutarch, *Ant.* 38, who does not mention this proposal made by Monaeses.

⁶¹ Plutarch, *Ant.* 38.2; Dio, 49.24.3-5.

⁶² Dio, 49.24.3.

three Levantine cities, but also the Parthian kingdom (which obviously was still to be conquered).⁶³ The plausibility of the suggestion according to which the rule over Parthia had been offered to Monaeses is understandable in the light of what has been said above.⁶⁴ Monaeses was a member of Parthia's nobility, and it is conceivable that Antony considered him to be a suitable future ruler for Parthia, less likely prone to take up the weapons against Rome. The return of Monaeses, however, will have thwarted these plans (if they ever existed), and have forced Antony to look for an alternative solution. Yet, whatever he eventually aimed to achieve, it seems very likely that the main objective of the campaign was to diminish the risk of a Parthian attack on Roman possessions in the eastern Mediterranean. Antony must have realised that this was an immense task that could not easily be fulfilled. For this reason, he appears not only to have secured sufficient legions and auxiliary cohorts, but also to have made attempts to deprive Phraates of his main ally, the Atropatenean king Artavasdes. The expedition was in the first instance entirely focused on Media Atropatene, and in particular on the assault on Phraaspa. It is very plausible that Antony hoped to bring about the surrender of the Atropatenean king by taking his wives and children, who resided in that city, as prisoners. Fortunately for Artavasdes, Antony never managed to seize Phraaspa. Logistic problems and reverses eventually turned the entire enterprise into a fiasco.

Conclusion

With Antony forced to acknowledge the superiority of his enemy, the era of recurrent military clashes between Rome and Parthia came to an end. An ensuing

⁶³ The cities in question are Larissa, Arethusa and Hierapolis (Plutarch, *Ant.* 38.1; cf. Dio, 49.24.2, who does not mention these cities explicitly). For more details on the potential motives of the grant of these three cities, see chapter 12.1. The grant of the Parthian kingdom only appears in Dio.

⁶⁴ The probable accuracy of Dio's words has also been acknowledged by Reinhold (1988) 59; Freyburger / Roddaz (1994) cxxxix-cxl.

ruler crisis between the incumbent king Phraates and the pretender Tiridates ensured that most attention within the Parthian world was devoted to that issue.⁶⁵ No political contact is known to have taken place between the two superpowers until sometime after the Battle of Actium, when Octavian became entangled in Parthia's domestic problems, and eventually not only managed to solve them, but also, as Augustus, succeeded, in 20, in restoring the standards lost in 53 and in 36.⁶⁶ This means that for the period of civil war after 42 only two instances of interaction between Rome and Parthia can be identified. The first one concerns the Parthian invasion of Syria and Asia Minor. The second instance is Antony's Parthian campaign. It is peculiar that further evidence for political or diplomatic interaction between both powers after this failed expedition in 36 is lacking. It is striking as well, that, contrary to its role between 44 and 42, nothing proves that Parthia supported a faction in the Roman state in the period after the defeat of Brutus and Cassius. Evidence for the presence of Parthian troops during the battle at Actium is for example missing, and it seems most likely that either Phraates was over-engaged in the dispute with the pretender Tiridates or that he had learned his lesson from previously betting on the wrong horse, and now just waited for the outcome of the clash.

⁶⁵ For more details on the conflict between Phraates and Tiridates, see among other Debevoise (1938) 135-141.

⁶⁶ On Octavian's/Augustus' involvement in the crisis and on his solution, see among other Cooley (2009) 241-245.

9 PTOLEMAIC KINGDOM

In Part II.A we saw how Cleopatra as sole Near Eastern ruler supported Dolabella and the triumvirs in the period from 44 and 42 despite the fact that Cassius and Brutus held supreme power in the eastern Mediterranean. That this stance was risky became clear in 42 when Cassius planned to launch a campaign against her – an enterprise that was only put off when Brutus summoned him. With the defeat of the tyrannicides at Philippi and Antony's subsequent assumption of power over the eastern Mediterranean, Cleopatra had an ally in her vicinity. How the relations between Rome and the Ptolemaic Kingdom advanced from that moment onwards until Actium, will be explained in what follows.

9.1 Antony and Cleopatra in Cilicia

The earliest testified inter-state relations between Rome and Egypt after the battles at Philippi go back to the year 41 when Antony was in Asia Minor engaged in dealing with Brutus' and Cassius' former allies and with the raising of money from cities and communities in order to finance the settlement of veteran soldiers in Italy.¹ At that time, he called upon Cleopatra to meet him at Tarsus in Cilicia. The Ptolemaic queen obeyed the order in any case. She had to give account for the charges made against her of having rendered assistance to Cassius in his war against Antony and Octavian instead of supporting the triumvirs.² Although these accusations are presented by Plutarch as the reason for Antony to have arranged

¹ Velleius, 2.74.1; Josephus, *AJ* 14.301-323; *BJ* 1.242; Suetonius, *Aug.* 13.3; Plutarch, *Ant.* 23; Appian, *BCiv.* 5.3-7; Dio, 48.1-3. Syme (1939) 206; Magie (1950) 427ff. Broughton (1952) 358, 371; Bengtson (1977) 155ff. Christ (1993) 439; Huzar (1978) 129-130.

² Plutarch, *Ant.* 25.1; cf. Appian, *BCiv.* 5.8; Huß (2001) 729-731; Sullivan (1990) 266-267; Hölbl (2001) 240.

the meeting with Cleopatra, other factors may have played a role as well. Hölbl argues for example that the real purpose of the meeting was to “assure... the support of the Ptolemaic queen in the impending Parthian war”.³ This view seems plausible in the light of another statement made by Plutarch according to whom Antony was making preparations for the war against Parthia when he summoned the Egyptian queen to Cilicia in 41.⁴ Although there is no other piece of evidence that undermines this account,⁵ our extant source material indicates that the plans for a military campaign against Parthia can never have progressed beyond the preliminary stage. Appian illustrates, for example, that Antony only had six legions of infantry at his disposal and 10,000 cavalrymen in 41.⁶ In the most positive estimate this number of legions could have consisted of about 30,000 soldiers. Crassus embarked on his Parthian expedition with approximately 40 to 44,000 troops (legions, cavalry and light-armed forces) in total, and Antony probably wished to gather more troops in order to prevent a repeat of the catastrophe that occurred at Carrhae in 53.⁷ Eventually he would have assembled approximately 70,000 Roman troops and 30,000 auxiliary forces at the start of his campaign in 36. It is therefore safe to conclude that if Antony was already making preparations to invade Parthia in 41, these plans cannot have been far advanced and were probably still in an early stage. Although this consideration does obviously not rule out that Antony intended to form an alliance with Cleopatra in

³ Pelling (1988) 185, 193; Sullivan (1990) 267; Hölbl (2001) 240.

⁴ Plutarch, *Ant.* 25.1. Dio, 48.2.3.

⁵ Cf. Pelling (1988) 193-194, who seems to suggest that Antony's siege upon Palmyra in 41 (related in Appian, *BCiv.* 5.9-10) was intended to be the overture of the war against Parthia, had Antony not decided to spend the winter from 41 to 40 in Egypt. There is, however, no indication given by Appian or by any other author which proves that the siege laid upon Palmyra was supposed to be the beginning of a war against Parthia. As we saw, when discussing this passage in chapter 5.1, Appian merely informs us that the pretext for the raid was the indecisiveness of this city to choose the Parthian or Roman side, and the real reason the desire for booty. The text by Appian can thus not be used as evidence for Antony fostering to launch a pre-emptive strike on Parthia in 41 – a view also uttered by Hekster / Kaizer (2004) 74-75, who also deal with other problems regarding the passage in question.

⁶ Appian, *BCiv.* 5.3; Dio, 48.2.3; Huzar (1978) 129-130.

⁷ Marshall (1976) 143-144.

41 for a future war against Parthia, there is no evidence available which can confirm this. It is thus most likely that the main reason for Antony to have summoned Cleopatra to Cilicia was to demand clarification regarding the accusations made against her of having rendered assistance to Cassius in his war against Antony and Octavian.

Appian's account illuminates that Cleopatra dismissed the charges made against her by asserting that she had given support to Dolabella, who was involved in a war against Cassius in Syria, and that she intended to assist the triumvirs during the war against the tyrannicides with a fleet, but that a storm had destroyed her vessels.⁸ Although the author does not mention whether Antony was convinced by her arguments, it is evident that she was cleared. The love affair between the Egyptian queen and Antony, which seems to have begun at this time, illustrates that.⁹ Following on the meeting, Cleopatra returned to Egypt and Antony joined her in Alexandria where he spent the winter of 41/40.¹⁰

9.2 *The assassination of Arsinoe*

Before Antony reached Egypt at the end of 41, however, other events occurred in the context of the relationship between Rome and the Ptolemaic Kingdom. At the meeting in Cilicia or perhaps slightly later, Cleopatra made Antony a few requests. She asked him to eliminate her sister Arsinoe, who had been endowed with the rule over Cyprus by Caesar in 48.¹¹ Cleopatra also demanded the removal of Serapion, the Egyptian στρατηγός of the island at the time when Brutus and Cassius were raising funds and troops in the East in 43 and 42. Antony obeyed her instructions and had Arsinoe killed at the Temple of Artemis in Ephesus, and

⁸ Appian, *BCiv.* 5.8.

⁹ Appian, *BCiv.* 5.8-9; Dio, 48.24.2; Plutarch, *Ant.* 25.1-4; Gowing (1992) 113-118.

¹⁰ Appian, *BCiv.* 5.10-11; Dio, 48.24.3; Plutarch, *Ant.* 28.1; Sullivan (1990) 267; Broughton (1952) 371.

¹¹ Dio, 42.35.5; Sullivan (1990) 258; Hölbl (2001) 235.

Serapion in Tyre, where he had taken refuge. Both assassinations seem to have occurred before Antony made his way for Egypt at the end of 41.¹² The motives underlying Cleopatra's request for the elimination of Arsinoe have unfortunately escaped notice of the ancient authors. Despite this lacuna, other events which have been documented in our sources, may give some insight into the reasons for the request. It is likely that the Ptolemaic queen had a desire to eliminate Arsinoe for the potential threat that she posed to the throne.¹³ Not only did she side with Ptolemy XIII and his henchmen against Caesar and Cleopatra in the Alexandrian War of 48 and 47, she was even acclaimed queen, serving as an opponent of Cleopatra.¹⁴ Following on Caesar's victory in this war, Arsinoe was taken to Rome where she featured in his triumph celebrated in 46. Afterwards, she was sent into exile to Ephesus and resided there as a suppliant in the Temple of Artemis.¹⁵ Although Arsinoe had lost her position of power by then, Cleopatra might still have seen her as a potential rival, who had to be eliminated. A different explanation should be given for the decision to have Serapion assassinated. Appian explains that the στρατηγός of Cyprus sided with Cassius in the war against the triumvirs in 42. Cleopatra may have been enraged by the support that Serapion rendered to Cassius. She had herself refused to give any assistance to the tyrannicide when he asked for it, and she probably expected her subordinate στρατηγός to conform with her decision.¹⁶ Serapion's disloyalty probably made Cleopatra suspicious, and for that reason she brought about his downfall.

¹² Josephus, *AJ* 15.89; *Ap.* 2.56-58; cf. Dio, 48.24.2, who refers wrongly to Cleopatra's brother being dragged from the temple of Artemis at Ephesus; cf. Appian, *BCiv.* 5.9, who mentions wrongly the temple at Miletus instead of Ephesus; dating the two eliminations in 41 is based on two consul nominations in Dio and on the location of the story in Appian's work. Sullivan (1990) 267; Hölbl (2001) 241.

¹³ Similar explanations in: Sullivan (1990) 265 and Huß (2001) 730-731.

¹⁴ Dio, 42.39.1; Sullivan (1990) 259; Hölbl (2001) 236.

¹⁵ Josephus, *AJ* 15.89; Dio, 43.19.2-3: Arsinoe was in one of Caesar's celebrated triumphs. Cf. *B.Alex.* 33, which only mentions that Arsinoe was removed from her rule; Hölbl (2001) 237.

¹⁶ Appian, *BCiv.* 5.9: Serapion giving assistance to Cassius; *BCiv.* 4.61: Cassius asked Cleopatra for support; Sullivan (1990) 267; Hölbl (2001) 241; Huß (2001) 731.

As has already been said, Cleopatra did not arrange for the elimination of Arsinoe and Serapion herself; she made a request to Antony to have them removed. The question then arises why she delegated this task to Antony and did not take up the removal of her sister and former στρατηγός herself. The only logical reason for me can be that Cleopatra felt that she did not have the authority to eliminate two of her enemies who had taken refuge to Tyre and Ephesus, both located in Roman territory. Although it is unclear whether Antony was himself legally allowed to undertake these actions, she must at least have thought that he could, and Antony was willing to obey her requests. Josephus, Appian and Dio all appear to regard Antony's obedience to be a result of his passion for her.¹⁷ The reliability of this explanation should however be questioned, since all these authors might have been influenced by an image of Antony propagated in imperial times. In my opinion, more plausible factors for Antony's conformity can be provided. First of all, as it was not in Antony's interest to have internal strife in Egypt, he will probably have agreed with Cleopatra that Arsinoe as a potential rival to her throne should be removed. Secondly, Serapion assisted Cassius in the war against the triumvirs. For that reason Antony probably obeyed Cleopatra's desire to have the ex-στρατηγός of Cyprus eliminated. The request for the elimination of Serapion and Arsinoe may have been made during the meeting of Cleopatra and Antony at Tarsos in 41, as we have already seen. Although their actual removal has not been recorded in the sources, we may assume that these acts were soon afterwards carried out.

9.3 The territorial grants of 37/36

In the winter of 41/40 or the following spring, Parthian armies crossed the Euphrates and overran Syria and extensive portions of Asia Minor as far as the

¹⁷ Josephus, *AJ* 15.88-89; Dio, 48.24.2; Appian, *BCiv.* 5.9.

Ionian west coast. The counter-attack followed in 39 and was conducted by the proconsul P. Ventidius Bassus. Antony did not intervene in the hostilities at all, as he was engaged with Octavian in a conflict against Sextus Pompeius who was threatening the grain supply to Italy.¹⁸ Only after the Battle of Gindarus in 38 and the subsequent expulsion of the Parthian armies from Syria did the triumvir return to the Near East and concerned himself with settling the affairs and the re-establishment of Roman authority in the region.¹⁹ The Commagenian king Antiochus who had granted asylum to Parthian soldiers in the aftermath of the invasion was the first ruler to toe the line. An expedition against this dynast had already begun on the instigation of Ventidius, and Antony succeeded to the command of this campaign at his arrival in the Levant. Although the exact outcome of the encounter is not known, it is clear that the king retained his royal position.²⁰ Less fortunate, however, seems to have been Lysanias, the prince of Chalcis, who was accused by Cleopatra of having brought in (ἐπάγειν) the Parthian forces in the year 40.²¹ Whether or not Antony was moved by this argument, he eventually did remove Lysanias from the throne, and had him assassinated in the mid-30s BC; his realm was subsequently awarded to Cleopatra.²² Bronze coinage from Chalcis that depicts the queen on the obverse and is dated both to year 21 of her reign (which began in 52/51) and to year 6 of the new era that she instituted in 37/36 (i.e. 32/31) also testifies to the Ptolemaic annexation of Lysanias' former principality.²³

¹⁸ On the conflict against Sextus Pompeius leading up the Treaty of Misenum in 39 and the renewed quarrel in 38, see Broughton (1952) 382-382, 386-388, 390-392 (with references).

¹⁹ For more details on the Parthian invasion, see chapter 8.1.

²⁰ On the war against Antiochus of Commagene in 38, see chapter 16.2.

²¹ Josephus, *AJ* 15.92. For more details on Lysanias' involvement in the Parthian invasion, and on his exact title (which is disputed), see chapter 11.2.

²² Josephus, *AJ* 15.92; *BJ* 1.440; Dio, 49.32.5. Cf. Porphyry, *BNJ* 260 F2 (17) who appears to be in error with his reference to Lysimachus instead of Lysanias.

²³ Seyrig (1950) 43-46; Schrapel (1996) 187-180. The establishment of a new era has been attested by Porphyry, *BNJ* 260 F2 (17).

The grant of the Princedom of Chalcis, however, was not an isolated incident. Both Dio and Josephus list Lysanias' realm among several other domains in the eastern Mediterranean that were transferred to Cleopatra. This grant of territories to Cleopatra has received ample attention, not only among current historians, but also among ancient authors. Discussion centres mainly on the date of the grants, which can only be determined with difficulty as a result of contradictory indications given by our sources. Nevertheless, most scholars gloss over this problem with our evidence and treat the gift of these domains with confidence as simultaneous events to be dated sometime between the winter of 37/36 and 34.²⁴ It is my purpose to take a more critical approach towards the evidence and to present a better founded chronology of the donations. The results of this examination may contribute to an improved understanding of these gifts in the context of the civil war. Yet, before focusing on that undertaking, it is worthwhile first to present an outline of the lands which can be securely identified as grants to Cleopatra.

Plutarch and Dio are most informative about the areas that have been conferred upon the Egyptian queen by Antony. Although at first review the donations mentioned by these two authors seem to be almost entirely divergent, a closer scrutiny of the details clarifies that most of the territories mentioned by Dio and Plutarch overlap; the deviations in naming are to a large degree merely manifestations of the different periods in which both authors wrote their works, and of the level of detail that they could or wished to provide. A full quotation of the relevant passages in Plutarch's biography of Antony and Dio's *Roman History* shows this. Having described how after the Treaty of Tarentum in 37 (which arranged for the renewal of the Triumvirate for a period of five years) Antony returned to Asia, Plutarch relates the following:²⁵

²⁴ Syme (1939) 260-261; Sullivan (1990) 270-271; Hölbl (2001) 242.

²⁵ Plutarch, *Ant.* 36.1-2: "Εὐδοῦσα δ' ἡ δεινὴ συμφορὰ χρόνον πολὺν, ὁ Κλεοπάτρας ἔρωσ, δοκῶν κατευνάσθαι καὶ κατακεκληθῆσθαι τοῖς βελτίοσι λογισμοῖς, αὐτὴς ἀνέλαμπε καὶ ἀνεθάρρει

“But the dire evil which had been slumbering for a long time, namely, his [Antony’s, ed.] passion for Cleopatra, which men thought had been charmed away and lulled to a rest by better considerations, blazed up again with renewed power as he drew near to Syria. And finally, like the stubborn and unmanageable beast of the soul, of which Plato speaks, he spurned away all saving and noble counsels and sent Fonteius Capito to bring Cleopatra to Syria. And when she had come, he made her a present of no slight or insignificant addition to her dominions, namely, Phoenicia, Coele Syria, Cyprus, and a large part of Cilicia; and still further, the balsam-producing part of Judaea, and all that part of Arabia Nabataea that slopes toward the outer sea. These gifts particularly annoyed the Romans”.

Dio places his account of those territorial awards immediately following the mention of Antony acknowledging his paternity over Cleopatra’s children Alexander Helios, Cleopatra Selene and Ptolemy Philadelphus.²⁶ About the gifts, Dio relates the following:²⁷

“he [Antony, ed.] gave them [Cleopatra and her children, ed.] extensive portions of Arabia, in the districts both of Malichus and of the Ituraeans (for he executed Lysanias, whom he himself had made king over them, on the charge that he had favoured Pacorus), and also extensive portions of Phoenicia and Palestine, parts of Crete, and Cyrene and Cyprus as well”.

Συρία πλησιάζοντος αὐτοῦ. καὶ τέλος, ὥσπερ φησὶν ὁ Πλάτων τὸ δυσπειθές καὶ ἀκόλαστον τῆς ψυχῆς ὑποζύγιον, ἀπολακτίσας τὰ καλὰ καὶ σωτήρια πάντα Καπίωνα Φοντήιον ἔπεμψεν ἄξοντα Κλεοπάτραν εἰς Συρίαν. ἐλθούσῃ δὲ χαρίζεται καὶ προστίθῃσι μικρὸν οὐδὲν οὐδ’ ὀλίγον, ἀλλὰ Φοινίκην, κοίλῃν Συρίαν, Κύπρον, Κιλικίας πολλήν· ἔτι δὲ τῆς τε Ἰουδαίων τὴν τὸ βάλσαμον φέρουσιν καὶ τῆς Ναβαταίων Ἀραβίας ὅση πρὸς τὴν ἐκτὸς ἀποκλίνει θάλασσαν. αὗται μάλιστα Ῥωμαίους ἠνίασαν αἱ δωρεαί” (LCL transl. adapted).

²⁶ Dio, 49.32.4. Cf. Plutarch, *Ant.* 36.3, who only refers to Antony’s recognition of Alexander Helios and Cleopatra Selene as his children, but does not mention Ptolemy Philadelphus.

²⁷ Dio, 49.32.5: “πολλὰ μὲν τῆς Ἀραβίας τῆς τε Μάλχου καὶ τῆς τῶν Ἰτυραίων (τὸν γὰρ Λυσανίαν, ὃν αὐτὸς βασιλέα σφῶν ἐπεποιήκει, ἀπέκτεινεν ὡς τὰ τοῦ Πακόρου πράξαντα) πολλὰ δὲ καὶ τῆς Φοινίκης τῆς τε Παλαιστίνης, Κρήτης τέ τινα καὶ Κυρήνην τὴν τε Κύπρον αὐτοῖς ἐχαρίσατο”.

If we disregard Dio's inclusion of Cleopatra's children in the territorial rearrangements for the moment, then agreement between these two authors is ascertained for the island of Cyprus, Phoenicia and for parts of Nabataea and Judaea.²⁸ Plutarch is the most specific one of the two, and elucidates that the portion of Nabataea granted to Cleopatra consisted of the land "that slopes towards the outer sea". As Bowersock has plausibly argued, Plutarch probably used the term "outer sea" (τὴν ἐκτὸς θάλασσαν) to refer to the Gulf of Aqaba and the Red Sea, since the Mediterranean Sea was known as the "inner sea" and the Dead Sea can hardly have been perceived as an "outer sea" because of its landlocked nature. Cleopatra was thus in all likelihood granted lands around the Gulf of Aqaba and in the northern Ḥejāz.²⁹ These areas were of economic importance for the Nabataeans with the trade route of incense from southern Arabia to Petra passing through this zone. Although there is no additional proof for the conferral of these coastal regions on the Red Sea to Cleopatra, references in Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities* and *Jewish War* do at least confirm that the Ptolemaic queen was given parts of Nabataea.³⁰

Concerning the "balsam-producing parts of Judaea" granted to Cleopatra, Plutarch does not provide us with any further detail. Fortunately, Josephus can bring some light in this matter by clarifying that the balsam-producing areas in

²⁸ Plutarch, *Ant.* 36.2; Dio, 49.32.5.

²⁹ Bowersock (1983) 41. Same view in Sullivan (1990) 212, but without argumentation. Hackl / Jenni / Schneider (2003) 580 claim that the exact areas granted to Cleopatra cannot be determined with certainty, but that they were probably located on the Red Sea. Cf. Lindner (1970) 96, who believes that the territories granted to Cleopatra were situated east of the Dead Sea; Starcky (1966) 910 keeps both options open.

³⁰ Josephus, *AJ* 15.92-96, *BJ* 1.360-362 states that Antony granted Cleopatra a portion of the lands of the Arabs (Ἀραβες) which she requested. Although the definition of the ethnic "Arabs" is varied in our ancient literary sources, in these particular passages, Josephus seems to refer to the Nabataean people, all the more since Plutarch clearly indicates the grant of a part of Nabataean territory to Cleopatra, and Dio refers to portions of Arabia (Ἀραβία) belonging to Malichus, who at that time was king of the Nabataeans. On the use of the terms "Arabs" and "Arabia" to indicate "Nabataeans" and "Nabataea", see among others Macdonald (2009). Cf. Retsö (2003) 364-392, esp. 371-378, who distinguishes between the Arabs and the Nabataeans, but fails to convince. Young (2001) 90-96 gives an overview of the trade routes through the Arabian Peninsula. Bowersock (1983) 41 has argued on the basis of the economic importance of the Ḥejāz and the areas around the Gulf of Aqaba that Antony bestowed in all likelihood this territory upon her.

question were located in the district around Jericho. He also informs us that the Ptolemaic queen did not rule this region herself. Josephus says that she gave the district around Jericho, as well as the portions of Arabia (i.e. Nabataea) acquired by her to Herod under lease for 200 talents annually. She also decided that Herod was to stand surety for the payment of 200 talents that the Nabataean king Malichus was due to pay her each year.³¹

With regard to the possessions that Cleopatra acquired in Phoenicia, Dio and Plutarch do not offer any details. Josephus is, again, more precise in this respect, and informs us that Antony granted Cleopatra “the cities between the Eleutheros River and Egypt with the exception of Tyre and Sidon, which he knew to have been free from the time of their ancestors”.³² The donations of some of those coastal cities – to be more specific, Tripolis (located just south of Arca), Berytus, Ptolemais and Dora – is corroborated by local bronze coinage which features Cleopatra’s bust on the obverse or reverse and is dated to various years between 37/36 and 31 by the use of both Cleopatra’s original regnal years, and the new era that began in 37/36.³³

Plutarch’s and Dio’s reference to the grant of Cyprus to Cleopatra is odd. Ever since Caesar had installed Ptolemy XIV and his sister Arsinoe (both siblings of Cleopatra) as ruling couple in Cyprus in 47, the island had been in Ptolemaic hands.³⁴ This situation would not change until after Actium. That Cyprus was given to Cleopatra in the mid-30s BC along with the aforementioned territories is thus an error.

The same is to be said for the grant of portions of Cilicia given to Cleopatra. Mitford has convincingly shown on the basis of an inscription found at Salamis, in which a certain Diogenes is mentioned as στρατηγός of the joint province Cilicia

³¹ Josephus, *AJ* 15.96, 107, 132; *BJ* 1.362.

³² Josephus, *AJ* 15.95: “τὰς ἐντὸς Ἐλευθέρου ποταμοῦ πόλεις ἄχρις Αἰγύπτου χωρὶς Τύρου καὶ Σιδῶνος, ἐκ προγόνων εἰδὼς ἐλευθέρας”. Cf. *BJ* 1.361, which has the same meaning, though worded differently.

³³ Schrapel (1996) 175-177, 184-188, 190-197.

³⁴ Dio, 42.35.5-6.

and Cyprus, and which can be dated to the time between September 39 and August 38, that at least by late summer 38 parts of Cilicia must have been in Ptolemaic hands. As Mitford suggests, Antony may have conferred portions of Cilicia already in 40 or 39 upon Cleopatra when other lands in Asia Minor were granted to native rulers. Plutarch does not provide us with any indication as to what part of Cilicia was transferred to Ptolemaic rule. From Strabo's *Geography*, though, it can be inferred that at least the localities of Coracesium, Arsinoe and Hamaxia, situated on the coast of Cilicia Tracheia, were conferred upon Cleopatra. Strabo does not indicate how far the donation stretched into the Cilician lands beyond these three towns. Mitford proposes "that a long extension to the east may properly be expected..."³⁵

In addition to certain lands in Cilicia, Plutarch also informs us along with Josephus of the conferral of Coele Syria upon the Ptolemaic queen.³⁶ We have already seen in an earlier chapter that the term Coele Syria has been used to denote a variety of territories in the Near East.³⁷ With the absence of any other sources, it is not possible to determine with certainty what region was meant by Coele Syria in the context of the grant of lands to Cleopatra. Yet, as was noted earlier, when the Roman governor of Syria, Sextus Caesar, made Herod στρατηγός of Coele Syria and Samaria in 47, reference was probably made to the cities in Transjordan, known collectively as the Decapolis. Possibly, this region was now given to Cleopatra as well.³⁸ The remaining two attested territories given to Cleopatra are mentioned by Dio and concern parts of the islands of Crete and Cyrene.³⁹

³⁵ Plutarch, *Ant.* 36.2; Strabo, 14.5.3, 14.5.6; Mitford (1980a) 1241-1242.

³⁶ Plutarch, *Ant.* 36.2 (quoted above); Josephus, *AJ* 15.79.

³⁷ See chapter 4.1.

³⁸ For similar view, see Schrapel (1996) chapter 6.3.

³⁹ Dio, 49.32.5. Crete and Cyrene are not located within the Near East. For more details on the exact parts of these two areas bestowed upon Cleopatra, see Schrapel (1996) 17-87.

Having given the details of the territories placed under Ptolemaic rule, it is now time to deal with the date of these gifts, which, as mentioned above, cannot be determined with certainty. Dio places the donations in the year 36.⁴⁰ Plutarch confirms Dio's statement by locating the gift of portions of Nabataea, Judaea, Cyprus, Cilicia, Coele Syria and Phoenicia among events that took place at the end of 37 or the beginning of 36.⁴¹ On the contrary, Josephus appears to locate the donation of parts of Judaea, Nabataea, Phoenicia and Coele Syria in his *Jewish Antiquities* and *Jewish War* among events which took place in 34 – to be more precise, just before Antony's campaign against Armenia in that year.⁴² Although there is no other source available which can reject this later date, the earlier date is to be preferred, firstly because it can explain the use of Cleopatra's new era that began in September 37, and secondly because in 34 other territorial grants were made that involved mainly Cleopatra's children, but which are ignored by Josephus.⁴³ Exceptions are, as we already pointed out, Cyprus and parts of Cilicia Tracheia, which were already in Ptolemaic hands by the late summer of 38. When Herod began his lease of the balsam-producing districts around Jericho and the portions of Nabataea granted to Cleopatra is not clear, but in all likelihood at some point between the beginning of Antony's Parthian campaign in 36 and his expedition war against Armenia in 34.⁴⁴

With regard to the chronology of the conferment of territories upon Cleopatra, we can thus conclude that most of the areas were probably donated towards the end of 37 or at some point in 36 with the exception of Cyprus and parts of Cilicia. We shall see in the following section that in 34 other territories were given to the Ptolemaic ruling family – mainly to Cleopatra's children. That her offspring was involved in the donations of 37/36, as Dio suggests, is highly

⁴⁰ Dio, 49.32.5.

⁴¹ Plutarch, *Ant.* 36.2.

⁴² Josephus, *AJ* 15.79, 92-96; *BJ* 1.360-363.

⁴³ On Josephus' probable erroneous dating of the donations see: Kromayer (1894) 572-576; Sullivan (1990) 270; Pelling (1988) 218. For the donations made in 34, see chapter 9.4.

⁴⁴ Josephus, *AJ* 15.96; *BJ* 1.362

unlikely. It is difficult to determine what had prompted Antony to grant all these territories. The ancient authors restrict themselves to sketching the general background of the gifts. Josephus clarifies for instance that Cleopatra had a general ambition to increase her possessions, and that she dominated Antony to such an extent that he appeared to comply with all her demands.⁴⁵ A similar general clarification for all the donations made to her by Antony is recalled in Plutarch's biography of this triumvir. Here it is Antony's passion for Cleopatra which made him grant her all these territories.⁴⁶ Dominant as the tendency is to consider the territorial grants of Antony to Cleopatra to be a result of his unrestrained passion for her, other explanations for the gifts might be more plausible. The territorial donations to Cleopatra, for example, can be seen as part of Antony's preparations for his intended military campaign against Parthia in 36 – that is to say, if they were indeed made before the onset of the expedition in the summer, which is most likely. Not only did he need alliances with kings or minor dynasts for the provision of soldiers and war equipment, he had to make sure as well that no native uprisings or Roman revolts against his position as triumvir would arise during the course of his expedition. In order to leave behind a secure and stable hinterland, he granted several territories in Asia Minor and the Near East to Cleopatra. Since she was not a native ruler in those areas and therefore completely dependent upon Antony for her position, he was assured of her loyalty. That loyalty of the kings and dynasts in the eastern Mediterranean was an important issue for Antony while he would be on campaign, can be inferred from the execution of Lysanias, the ruler of Chalcis, who, as we have just seen, was accused of having favoured the Parthian invaders in 40.

The grant of territories to Cleopatra was, however, not merely a plan of Antony. As we have already seen, Josephus considers the Egyptian queen to be the driving force behind the gifts. The image of Cleopatra dictating Antony,

⁴⁵ Josephus, *AJ* 15.88, 92-93; *BJ* 1.359-360.

⁴⁶ Plutarch, *Ant.* 36.1-2.

though, is probably a manifestation of Augustus' successful anti-Antonian propaganda that influenced the works of many historians, not in the least Nicolaus of Damascus, Herod's court-historian who had a good relationship with Augustus, and whose works form the main source of Josephus' historical treatises. Nevertheless, *that* Cleopatra cherished the wish to extend her rule over considerable parts of the Near East and Asia Minor, in the hope of restoring the erstwhile empire ruled by her ancestors Ptolemy II and III in the third century BC, which stretched as far as southern Anatolia and Syria, is very likely.⁴⁷

9.4 The "Donations of Alexandria" in 34

The territories with which Cleopatra was endowed between 40 and 36 remained largely unchanged in Egyptian hands until at least the end of Antony's Armenian campaign in 34. Following the Armenian campaign in 34 he modified the settlement concluded a few years earlier and redistributed some of the territories in the East among Cleopatra and their children.⁴⁸ Dio and Plutarch are the two ancient authors informing us about the new division. Having described Antony's celebration of his victory over the Armenian king Artavasdes in Alexandria in 34, Dio relates how in the assembly he announced his territorial reorganisation:⁴⁹

⁴⁷ On the reigns of these two kings, see Hölbl (2001) 35-76; Huß (2001) 251-380.

⁴⁸ See map 1 for clarification.

⁴⁹ Dio, 49.41.1-3: "ὁ Ἀντώνιος τοὺς τε Ἀλεξανδρέας εἰστίασε, καὶ τὴν Κλεοπάτραν τοὺς τε παιδας αὐτῆς ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ παρεκαθίσατο, δημηγορήσας τέ τινα ἐκείνην τε βασιλίδα βασιλέων καὶ τὸν Πτολεμαῖον, ὃν Καισαρίωνα ἐπωνόμαζον, βασιλέα βασιλέων καλεῖσθαι ἀκέλευσε. καὶ αὐτοῖς καὶ τὴν Αἴγυπτον τὴν τε Κύπρον, ἄλλην διανομὴν τινα ποιησάμενος, ἔδωκε· τοῦ τε γὰρ προτέρου Καίσαρος τὴν μὲν γυναῖκα τὸν δὲ υἱὸν ὄντως γεγονέναι ἔλεγε, καὶ ἐς τὴν ἐκείνου δὴ χάριν ταῦτα ποιεῖν ἐσκήπτετο, ὅπως τὸν Καίσαρα τὸν Ὀκταουιανὸν ἐκ τούτου, ὅτι ποιητὸς ἄλλ' οὐ γνήσιος αὐτοῦ παῖς ἦν, διαβάλλοι. ἐκείνοις μὲν δὴ ταῦτ' ἔνειμε, τοῖς δὲ δὴ αὐτοῦ παισὶ τοῖς ἐκ τῆς Κλεοπάτρας οἱ γεγονόσι, Πτολεμαίῳ μὲν τὴν τε Συρίαν καὶ τὰ ἐντὸς τοῦ Εὐφράτου μέχρι τοῦ Ἑλλησπόντου πάντα, Κλεοπάτρᾳ δὲ τὴν Λιβύην τὴν περὶ Κυρήνην, τῷ τε ἀδελφῷ αὐτῶν Ἀλεξάνδρῳ τὴν τε Ἀρμενίαν καὶ τὰλλα τὰ πέραν τοῦ Εὐφράτου μέχρις Ἰνδῶν δώσειν ὑπέσχετο· καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖνα ὡς ἔχων ἤδη ἐχαρίζετο".

“Antony feated the Alexandrians, and in the assembly made Cleopatra and her children sit by his side; also in the course of his address to the people he commanded that she should be called Queen of Kings, and Ptolemy, whom they named Caesarion, King of Kings. And he then made a new distribution of the provinces, giving them Egypt and Cyprus in addition; for he declared that in very truth one was the son of the former Caesar, and he professed to be taking these measures for Caesar’s sake, though his purpose was to cast reproach upon Caesar Octavianus because he was an adopted and not a real son of his. Besides making this assignment to them, he promised to give to his children by Cleopatra the following districts: to Ptolemy [Philadelphus, ed.], Syria and all the region west of the Euphrates as far as the Hellespont; to Cleopatra [Selene, ed.], the Cyrenaica in Libya; and and to their brother Alexander [Helios, ed.], Armenia and the rest of the countries east of the Euphrates as far as India; for he even bestowed the last-named regions as if they were already in his possession”.

Dio clarifies that Cleopatra and Caesarion were allotted the rule over Egypt itself and over Cyprus. Ptolemy Philadelphus was given Syria and all the regions west of the Euphrates as far as the Hellespont, Cleopatra Selene Cyrenaica, and Alexander Helios the lands east of the Euphrates as far as India. Cleopatra was given the title “Queen of Kings” and Caesarion the title “King of Kings”. Plutarch presents us with a similar version of the domains that Antony conferred upon the Ptolemaic ruling family in 34 at Alexandria:⁵⁰

“After filling the gymnasium with a throng and placing on a tribunal of silver two thrones of gold, one for himself and the other for Cleopatra, and other lower thrones

⁵⁰ Plutarch, *Ant.* 54.3-5: “ἐμπλήσας... ὄχλου τὸ γυμνάσιον καὶ θέμενος ἐπὶ βήματος ἀργυροῦ δύο θρόνους χρυσοῦς, τὸν μὲν ἑαυτῷ, τὸν δὲ Κλεοπάτρα, καὶ τοῖς παισὶν ἑτέρους ταπεινοτέρους, πρῶτον ἦεν ἀπέφηνε Κλεοπάτραν βασιλίσσαν Αἰγύπτου καὶ Κύπρου καὶ Λιβύης καὶ κοίλης Συρίας, συμβασιλεύοντος αὐτῇ Καισαρίωνος, ὃς ἐκ Καίσαρος ἐδόκει τοῦ προτέρου γεγονέναι Κλεοπάτραν ἔγκυν καταλιπόντος· δεύτερον δὲ τοὺς ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ Κλεοπάτρας υἱοὺς βασιλεῖς βασιλέων ἀναγορεύσας Ἀλεξανδρῷ μὲν Ἀρμενίαν ἀπένειμε καὶ Μηδίαν καὶ τὰ Πάρθων, ὅταν ὑπαγάγηται, Πτολεμαίῳ δὲ Φοινίκην καὶ Συρίαν καὶ Κιλικίαν. ἅμα δὲ καὶ προήγαγε τῶν παιδῶν Ἀλεξανδρον μὲν ἐσθῆτι Μηδικῇ τιάραν καὶ κίταριν ὀρθὴν ἐχούσῃ, Πτολεμαίον δὲ κρηπίσι καὶ χλανίδι καὶ καυσίᾳ διαδηματοφόρῳ κεκοσμημένον. αὕτη γὰρ ἦν σκευὴ τῶν ἀπ’ Ἀλεξάνδρου βασιλέων, ἐκείνη δὲ Μήδων καὶ Ἀρμενίων”.

for his sons, in the first place he declared Cleopatra Queen of Egypt, Cyprus, Libya, and Coele Syria, and she was to share her throne with Caesarion. Caesarion was believed to be a son of the former Caesar, by whom Cleopatra was left pregnant. In the second place, he proclaimed his own sons by Cleopatra Kings of Kings, and to Alexander [Helios, ed.] he allotted Armenia, Media and Parthia (when he should have subdued it), to Ptolemy [Philadelphus, ed.] Phoenicia, Syria and Cilicia. At the same time he also produced his sons, Alexander arrayed in Median garb, which included a tiara and upright head-dress, Ptolemy in boots, short cloak, and broad-brimmed hat surmounted by a diadem. For the latter was the dress of the kings who followed Alexander [the Great, ed.], the former that of Medes and Armenians".

Plutarch says that Cleopatra and her co-regent Caesarion were given the rule over Egypt, Cyprus, Libya and Coele Syria. Alexander Helios was given Armenia, Media (Atropetene) and Parthia, and Ptolemy Phoenicia, Syria and Cilicia. Antony's male offspring by Cleopatra were given the title "King of Kings". Several scholars have dismissed both versions as exaggerated outlines of the territories granted to Cleopatra, since most of the domains allegedly awarded to the Ptolemies were still ruled by Roman governors, or native kings and princes.⁵¹ Be that as it may, it would go too far to reject the grant outright. Armenia had been annexed by Rome in 34, and was no longer in the hands of king Artavasdes.⁵² Moreover, in 33 Antony betrothed Alexander Helios to the daughter of the Atropatenian king Artavasdes, thereby securing future Ptolemaic control over that kingdom.⁵³

The reasons behind the grant of such enormous territories to Cleopatra and her children are difficult to determine. Recently, a plausible suggestion has been made by Strootman, who argues that the territorial donations were a means by which Antony could increase Rome's control over the Near East through the Ptolemies, with whom he was linked as the father of three of Cleopatra's

⁵¹ Pelling (1988) 248; Hölbl (2001) 292.

⁵² See chapter 14.2.

⁵³ See chapter 15.1.

children.⁵⁴ The Near East was a region characterised by the coexistence of numerous kingdoms and principalities which had emerged from the disintegrating Seleucid Kingdom in the second half of the second century BC. In order to increase the stability in the region, Antony envisioned bringing it under indirect Roman control by placing it under the rule of the Ptolemies, who by themselves were dependent upon Rome. In this way, Rome could avoid the costs of maintaining a province.⁵⁵

Yet, whatever the exact rationale was behind the so-called “Donations of Alexandria”, the territorial reorganisation would never be implemented. Three years after Antony celebrated his Armenian victory at Alexandria, Actium brought an end to the empire that Antony was building in the East. Cleopatra did provide Antony with vital military support at Actium, but the assistance could not turn the tide.⁵⁶

Conclusion

In this chapter we have seen how Cleopatra asked her paramour Antony to solve internal Ptolemaic issues for her. Antony on the other hand implemented a wide-ranging territorial reorganisation of the Near East, which would make even Pompey’s rearrangement in the 60s BC look bleak. It has proven difficult to provide an all-encompassing explanation for the grant of territories to Cleopatra and the children that she bore with Antony. It seems likely though that he wanted to place the entire Near East and Asia Minor under the Ptolemaic rule – possibly in order to create stability. This grand Ptolemaic empire would then be standing

⁵⁴ Strootman (2010).

⁵⁵ Strootman (2010) 156-157.

⁵⁶ Plutarch, *Ant.* 65-68; Dio, 50.31-35.

under Rome's hegemony. At Actium, the queen was present with her navy, but her aid proved to be in vain.

10 JUDAEA

Among all the interstate contacts which Rome maintained with kingdoms and principalities in the Near East from 44 until 42, the political relationship with Judaea stood out for Rome's strongest interference into the financial and political affairs of a principality or kingdom. The intrusion manifested itself primarily in the heavy contributions which Cassius imposed on Judaea in 43, possibly in addition to the already existing Roman land tax. In need of enormous funds for the maintenance of his armies in the Near East, Cassius did not only force cities and smaller communities within Rome's provinces to raise money and supplies. He also turned his eye beyond the provincial boundaries, and exploited Judaea as a goldmine from which financial resources could be freely extracted as if it constituted a part of the *Imperium Romanum*. Although Cassius seemed to have encountered some resistance among the population, Judaeans were, following the example of Roman governors, for the most part cooperative with Rome – in particular Antipater and his son Herod.¹ Cassius left Syria in the beginning of 42 and met Brutus in Asia Minor before the war against Antony and Octavian took place, which proved to be fatal for the two Republicans. With their demise, the balance of power in the Roman Empire shifted towards the triumvirs. Antony eventually took over control over the eastern Mediterranean. How the relations between Rome and Judaea developed from that moment onwards until the Battle of Actium, needs to be considered at present.

¹ See chapter 1.7.

10.1 *The quest for Antony's favour*

Following the Battle of Philippi, Octavian returned to Italy and took the organisation of the land allotments for veteran soldiers in hand, while Antony spent the remainder of the year in Greece, and proceeded in the spring of 41 to Asia Minor from where he made a tour through Anatolia and the Near East. On his journey, Antony began to levy contributions from cities and other communities in order to finance the rewards which had been promised to the troops. At the same time, embassies from various parts came to meet Antony, and former supporters of Brutus and Cassius approached him to give account for their past conduct.² One of the delegations seeking to have a meeting with Antony at some point in 41 when he resided in Bithynia consisted of “the powerful among the Judaeans” (Ἰουδαίων οἱ δυνατοί) who intended to bring forward accusations against Antipater's sons Herod and Phasael.³ Josephus informs us that the two brothers were charged with “seizing the government through force and leaving to Hyrcanus merely titular honours”.⁴ At the time of this deputation, Herod probably still held his position as στρατηγός over the Galilee, Samaria and Coele Syria, and Phasael his position over Jerusalem and the surrounding area. Recognition of the grievances brought forward would almost certainly have ended their political career and have left Hyrcanus alone in charge of his principality as ἐθνάρχης. Unfortunately for the members of the embassy, Antony seems not to have given

² Dio, 48.2.2-3; Plutarch, *Ant.* 23.1; Appian, *BCiv.* 5.3-8; Suetonius, *Aug.* 13.3; Josephus, *AJ* 14.301; *BJ* 1.242. On the land allotments, the ensuing war in Italy with L. Antonius, the collection of funds and the former supporters of Brutus and Cassius, see among others Rice Holmes (1928) 90-98; Syme (1939) 206-212; Buchheim (1960) 9-28; Huzar (1986) 129-130, 148ff; Bengtson (1977) 153ff.

³ Josephus, *BJ* 1.242. Cf. *AJ* 14.302 which refers to this group as “those of the Judaeans in power” (Ἰουδαίων οἱ ἐν τέλει).

⁴ Josephus, *BJ* 1.242: “βίβλ... κρατεῖν τῶν πραγμάτων, ὄνομα δὲ μόνον περιεῖναι Ὑρκανῶ τίμιον” (LCL transl. adapted). Cf. *AJ* 14.301-302, in which Josephus also claims – in different words – that accusations were brought forward against Herod and Phasael “to the effect that while Hyrcanus had the outward appearance of sovereignty, it was they who had all the power” (“πρόσχημα μὲν εἶναι λέγοντες τῆς βασιλείας Ὑρκανόν, τούτους δὲ τὴν πᾶσαν ἔχειν ἐξουσίαν”).

them the opportunity to lodge their complaints.⁵ Josephus reports that Herod, who had also travelled to Bithynia, successfully used money to persuade Antony not to grant his adversaries an audience.⁶ Plausible as this version appears to be, other considerations may have influenced Antony's goodwill towards the two brothers as well. Several scholars have contended, for example, that the decision to dismiss the embassy of influential Judaeans was prompted by Antony's hospitable relations with the late Antipater.⁷ Both men had already maintained good personal relations with each other ever since Antipater entertained Antony with hospitality during the latter's term as *praefectus equitum* in Syria under Gabinius from 57 until 55. Yet, conceivable as it is for this friendship to have imposed a moral obligation on Antony to support Antipater's sons by taking them under his protection, it would go too far to perceive Antony's conduct towards the embassy of powerful Judaeans entirely as a compensation for Antipater's past generosity. The choice to disregard the deputation may have been dictated by more pragmatic motives, such as the realisation that the two brothers had become indispensable for the implementation of detested Roman measures. In a previous chapter we have already seen that Herod and Phasael participated in the collection of the 700 talents that Cassius had demanded of Judaea in 43, despite the resistance that this action provoked among the local population. This cooperative and loyal attitude may have made Antony appreciate that a condemnation of the two brothers would have entailed the loss of two reliable supporters, and that he thus had to act

⁵ Cf. Baumann (1983) 131, who renders Josephus' statement according to which the members of the delegation did not receive a hearing, implausible. There is, however, no reason to doubt Josephus' words.

⁶ Josephus, *AJ* 14.303; *BJ* 1.242.

⁷ Jones (1938) 38; Abel (1952) 324; Buchheim (1960) 64; Schalit (1969) 68; Smallwood (1976) 49; Baumann (1983) 131 and Richardson (1999) 123 contend that the hospitable relations maintained by Antipater with Antony and Gabinius may have played a role in Antony's resolution to decline a meeting with the Judaeian delegation. Josephus suggests that the guest-friendship with Antipater influenced Antony's decision to appoint Herod and Phasael as *tetrarchs* later during 41 in Antioch (*AJ* 14.326; *BJ* 1.244). There is no reason to assume that these hospitable relations may not have worked in favour of Herod in his attempt to prevent the meeting between Antony and his Judaeian adversaries in Bithynia.

on their behalf against “the powerful among the Judaeans” that constituted the embassy.⁸

In order to facilitate a full understanding of Antony’s disregard of the deputation and his support for the Antipatrid brothers, the issue needs to be addressed who or what faction in Judaea the embassy represented and whose interests it sought to serve. Unfortunately, none of our extant sources provides us with any indications which could illuminate this matter. The nature of the accusations laid down by the envoys against Herod and Phasael would suggest that the members of this embassy were supporters of Hyrcanus. This is very unlikely, though, as Hyrcanus’ relationship with Herod had improved during the past few years, in particular since the betrothal of his granddaughter Mariamme to Herod in 42.⁹ It is much more plausible that the envoys represented a party which was concerned more generally about the gradual erosion of the High Priest’s authority and the concomitant accumulation of power by Herod and Phasael at the hands of successive Roman governors in the East. Possibly in the realisation that Rome possessed the key to reverse this process, representatives of this political group approached Antony on the earliest possible occasion in Bithynia in the hope to see the Antipatrid elements in the administration of Judaea eliminated. The faction probably expected that the decay of the High Priest’s powers would become irreparable if they did not act at that time and tried to convince Antony to remove Herod and Phasael from the political stage altogether. Unfortunately for the members of the delegation, Antony dismissed their complaints and decided in favour of the two brothers.

⁸ Otto (1913) 22; Abel (1952) 324; Schalit (1969) 68; Buchheim (1960) 64 have a similar view.

⁹ Although Josephus asserts in *AJ* 14.300 and *BJ* 1.241 that Herod and Mariamme became connected by an agreement of marriage, it is clear that this connection was nothing more than an engagement in 42. The actual marriage only took place several years later in 37 (*AJ* 14.467; *BJ* 1.344).

10.2 Privileges restored to Judaeans

Later during that year, an embassy sent on behalf of Hyrcanus and the Judaeans people approached Antony at Ephesus. Josephus explains in his *Jewish Antiquities* that the delegation requested that Antony bring about the liberation of those Judeans, who had been captured by Cassius “against the martial law”, and the restoration of the territories of which the Judaeans had been stripped in the time of Cassius’ hegemony over the Near East.¹⁰ Antony deemed these two pleas to be justified, and allegedly informed Hyrcanus in a letter, cited by Josephus, about the measures he himself had implemented.¹¹ As a means to set the Judaeans free, Antony claimed in this letter to have set up notices throughout cities with the instruction to release any persons who had been sold by Cassius or his subordinates.¹² Although it is unclear how many cities were given the order to liberate such individuals, Tyre, Sidon, Antioch and Aradus were in all likelihood among them. Josephus includes in his account a letter of Antony addressed to the magistrates, council and people of Tyre, in which he ordered them to restore to the previous owners whatever they had received from his opponents (i.e. Cassius and Brutus):

“... it is my [Antony’s, ed.] wish that our allies shall have peace at your hands, and that whatever you have received from our opponents shall not be retained by you but shall be restored to those from whom it was taken”.¹³

The same instructions appear in a decree that was allegedly dispatched to Tyre and which has been preserved by Josephus as part of another letter:

¹⁰ Josephus, *AJ* 14.304: “οὐ νόμῳ πολέμου”. This episode has no parallel in *BJ*.

¹¹ Josephus, *AJ* 14.305; *AJ* 14.306-313 contains the letter.

¹² Josephus, *AJ* 14.313.

¹³ Josephus, *AJ* 14.315: “βούλομαι καὶ τὴν ἀφ’ ὑμῶν εἰρήνην τοῖς συμμάχοις ἡμῶν ὑπάρχειν, καὶ ὅσα παρὰ τῶν ἡμετέρων ἐλάβετε ἀνταγωνιστῶν μὴ συγχωρεῖν, ἀλλὰ ταῦτα ἀποδοῦναι τοῖς ἀφηρεμένοις”. The order forms part of a letter transmitted in *AJ* 14.314-318.

“And whatever was sold belonging to the Judaeans, whether persons or possessions, shall be released, the slaves to be free, as they were originally, and the possessions to be returned to their former owners”.¹⁴

Similar decrees or missives with instructions to return Judaeen belongings and to liberate Judaeen persons sold off by Cassius were allegedly also sent to Sidon, Antioch and Aradus.¹⁵ The origin of those people is not attested in our extant source material. Nevertheless, it does seem plausible that Antony refers in his decree to the people of Gophna, Emmaus, Lydda, Thamna and perhaps even the inhabitants of other cities whom Cassius is said to have sold as slaves one or two years earlier.¹⁶

In addition to these instructions, though, Antony also ordered Tyre in one of the two aforementioned letters to return the territories that had been seized from the Judaeans when the tyrannicides held the eastern Mediterranean under their control.¹⁷ Although the letter in question does not specify the areas that had been captured, or the circumstances under which the annexation took place, it is very likely that reference is made to those territories occupied after Cassius had left the Levant in the beginning of 42 to prepare for the prospective clash with Antony and Octavian. Cassius’ departure had left a power vacuum behind and was used by Antigonus, the son of Hyrcanus’ late brother Aristobulus, to make an attempt for the throne. Antigonus was supported by Ptolemy, son of Mennaesus, the prince of Chalcis, and by Marion, the tyrant (τύραννος) of Tyre. Marion

¹⁴ Josephus, *AJ* 14.321: “καὶ ὅσα ἐπράξη Ἰουδαίων ἤτοι σώματα ἢ κτήσις, ταῦτα ἀφεξήτω, τὰ μὲν σώματα ἐλεύθερα εἶναι, ὥς ἦν ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς, ἡ δὲ κτήσις τοῖς πρότερον κυρίοις” (LCL transl. adapted). *AJ* 14.319-322 contains the letter with the decree (14.320-322).

¹⁵ Josephus, *AJ* 14.323: “In the same way he also wrote to the people of Sidon, Antioch and Aradus” (“Τὸ δ’ αὐτὸ τοῦτο καὶ Σιδωνίοις καὶ Αντιοχεῦσιν καὶ Ἀραδίοις ἔγραψεν”). The letter containing the decree is cited in *AJ* 14.319-322.

¹⁶ Josephus, *AJ* 14.275 and *BJ* 1.222 refer to the selling of inhabitants of Gophna, Emmaus, Lydda and Thamna. For more details on this event, see chapter 4.2.

¹⁷ Josephus, *AJ* 14.314: Antony refers to the territories that had been annexed “when our adversaries were in control” (“κατὰ τὴν τῶν ἐναντιουμένων ἡμῖν ἐπικράτειαν”).

annexed three strongholds in the Galilee, whose exact identification is uncertain. Although Josephus claims that Herod in the end managed to expel the tyrant from the Galilee, it is possible that there were other areas that Marion had not returned and that Antony in 41 demanded their restoration to Judaeans rule.¹⁸

Yet, besides the return of seized territories and persons, Antony is also said to have granted the Judaeans the rights (τοῖς... φιλανθρωποῖς) that he and Dolabella had formerly bestowed upon them.¹⁹ What the nature of those privileges was remains unfortunately obscure in the passage of the *Jewish Antiquities* (14.313) that mentions the renewed bestowal of Antony's and Dolabella's awards. Josephus may refer to Dolabella's grant of certain privileges to the Judaeans in the beginning of 43 in reply to requests made by envoys of Hyrcanus when the proconsul Dolabella held the province of Asia.²⁰ Those privileges concerned the exemption of Judaeans living in that province from military service and the permission "to follow the native customs and to come together for sacred and holy rites in accordance with the law, and to make offerings for the sacrifices".²¹ It is possible for these rights to have become obsolete after the defeat of Dolabella in the summer of 43 with the quick succession of governors in the East, and that Hyrcanus and the Judaeans living in Asia now hoped to see them re-affirmed.²²

¹⁸ Josephus, *AJ* 14.298; *BJ* 1.238-239. Richardson (1999) 123 comes up with a similar argument. For more details on the upheaval in Judaea in 42 after Cassius had left Syria, see among others Smallwood (1976) 48; Baumann (1983) 127-128.

¹⁹ Josephus, *AJ* 14.313.

²⁰ Josephus, *AJ* 14.223-224.

²¹ Josephus, *AJ* 14.227: "χρησθαι τοῖς πατρίοις ἔθισμοις, ἰερῶν ἕνεκα καὶ ἁγίων συναγομένοις, καθὼς αὐτοῖς νόμιμον, καὶ τῶν πρὸς τὰς θυσίας ἀφαιρεμάτων" (LCL transl. adapted). The quotation forms part of a letter that Dolabella is claimed by Josephus to have written to the city of Ephesus in January 43 (14.225-227). The letter contains instructions to exempt the Jews from military service and to allow them to maintain their native customs. Since Dolabella also ordered Ephesus to inform other cities of the necessary actions in accordance with the privileges granted by him, it is clear that these rights were to be in force throughout the entire province of Asia. That Antony's letter to Hyrcanus, as it is preserved by Josephus (*AJ* 14.313), may have referred to these privileges is also proposed by Stern (1974b) 218; Smallwood (1976) 50, n.17; Buchheim (1960) 64; Schalit (1969) 68.

²² Judaeans living in the Diaspora regarded Hyrcanus in his capacity as High Priest to be the only one with authority to stand up for their religious rights. On the authority of the High Priest among the Judaeans in the Diaspora, see among others Rocca (2008) 282.

However, as Smallwood has argued, it is equally conceivable that the *φιλόανθρωπα* relate to the grants given by the Senate on Antony's and Dolabella's initiative to the Judaeans in reply to requests made by a delegation sent to Rome on behalf of Hyrcanus in 44.²³ Unfortunately, the details of those grants have not been mentioned in that part of the Senatorial Decree preserved by Josephus.²⁴ It remains thus impossible to establish with certainty which of the rights granted by Antony and Dolabella in an earlier stage were now returned. Overall, though, Judaea seems to have benefited from the actions that Antony had taken in response to the requests made to him in Ephesus. The measures of which we have knowledge were aimed at the return of territories, the reinstatement of certain rights and the liberation of Judaeans enslaved by Cassius. Further below, though, we shall see that this benevolent attitude would not endure. Just like Cassius, Antony could not abstain from imposing heavy contributions upon Judaea, and it will also be revealed that he did not feel restrained in transferring parts of Judaeian territories to others.²⁵

10.3 Herod and Phasaël made *τετράρχαι* of Judaea

The delegation consisting of “the powerful among the Judaeans” that came to see Antony in Bithynia in 41 was not demoralised by Antony's refusal to hear their grievances. Later during the year, when Antony came to Syria, another embassy consisting of “a hundred of the most influential among the Judaeans” approached him.²⁶ The deputation went to Daphne, near Antioch, with the intention to bring

²³ Josephus, *AJ* 14.217-222; Smallwood (1976) 50 n.17.

²⁴ Josephus, *AJ* 14.219-222.

²⁵ See chapter 9.3.

²⁶ Josephus, *AJ* 14.324: “Ιουδαίων ἑκατὸν οἱ δυνατώτατοι”. Cf. Josephus, *BJ* 1.243 which refers to the members of this embassy as “the one hundred men among the Judaeans who were in power” (“οἱ ἐν τέλει Ιουδαίων ἑκατὸν ἄνδρες”, own translation).

forward accusations against Herod, and possibly also against his brother Phasael.²⁷ Unlike the mission sent to Antony earlier in Bithynia, this one *did* obtain an audience. Unfortunately, the extant sources do not provide us with any suggestion about the nature of the indictments laid down, nor about the motivations of the deputation to lodge complaints. Yet, whatever the character of the accusations, Herod and Phasael do not seem to have suffered in any way from the measures that Antony was about to implement. On the contrary, Josephus explains that after Antony had listened to the most eloquent speakers of the delegation, and had heard Hyrcanus and the Roman commander Messalla,²⁸ both of whom spoke on behalf of Herod and Phasael, he appointed them both as tetrarchs (τετράρχαι).²⁹ The *Jewish War* reveals that the two brothers were awarded “the whole of Judaea” as their area of responsibility.³⁰ What that decision meant for the position of Hyrcanus, who still held his positions as High Priest and ἑθνάρχης of the Judaeans, remains unclear. Nothing in our source material suggests that he lost any of these posts at that point. In their new capacity, Herod and Phasael were thus in all likelihood at least nominally subordinate to Hyrcanus.³¹ Whether the two brothers applied a geographical division between their areas of authority, is unknown. The possibility can at any rate not be excluded. As suggested by several authors, it is possible that they retained the same division as that had existed

²⁷ Josephus, *BJ* 1.243 asserts that the Judaeian delegation brought forward accusations against “τῶν ἀδελφῶν”, referring in all likelihood to Herod and Phasael. Cf. Josephus, *AJ* 14.324 who claims that charges were made against Herod and “the ones around him” (“τῶν περὶ αὐτόν”). The “τῶν περὶ αὐτόν” did probably include Herod’s brother Phasael and other supporters among the ruling elite, whose identities remain unknown.

²⁸ It has been suggested by Schalit (1969) 69 among others that this Messalla is to be identified with M. Valerius Messalla Corvinus, the consul of the year 31. Although the official position of Valerius Messalla Corvinus in 41 is unknown, it cannot be excluded that he was the Messalla to whom Josephus refers, all the more so since he had been active in the East as a commander in support of Brutus and Cassius in 43 and 42, and had changed his loyalty to Antony after Philippi. On Messalla’s activities in the East, see Broughton (1952) 355, 367.

²⁹ Josephus, *AJ* 14.324-326; *BJ* 1.243-244.

³⁰ Josephus, *BJ* 1.244: “πᾶσαν... τὴν Ἰουδαίαν”. Cf. Josephus, *AJ* 14.326, which is less specific and claims that the two brothers as tetrarchs were assigned “the affairs of the Judaeans” (“τὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων... πράγματα”, own translation). This latter statement does not, however, refute the version in *BJ*.

³¹ Also suggested by Otto (1913) 22; Schalit (1969) 70; Smallwood (1976) 50; Baumann (1983) 135.

between them when they were appointed στρατηγοί in 47: Phasael Jerusalem and the surrounding area, and Herod the Galilee.³² There is at any rate no reason to assume that they had been awarded a quarter of Judaea as suggested by the name of their position, τετράρχης, meaning “ruler of a quarter”. It has already been argued convincingly that the name of this position had lost its original meaning by the middle of the first century BC.³³

About the driving forces for the decision to appoint Herod and Phasael as tetrarchs, we are very badly informed. Josephus implies that the nomination was at least in part induced by the hospitable relations that Antony had maintained with Antipater, the father of Herod and Phasael, since the mid-50s BC.³⁴ Yet, other considerations of a more political nature will probably have played a greater role. In particular the loyal attitude of the two brothers towards previous Roman generals in the East is likely to have convinced Antony to award them an official post in the administration of Judaea. Although the triumvir probably understood that Herod and Phasael had thus far shown a tendency to support any Roman general holding power over Syria regardless of the political background, the internal strife that erupted in the aftermath of Cassius’ departure from the Levant in the beginning of 42 revealed how much hostility there still was within Judaea against the Antipatrids. By appointing both brothers as τετράρχαι, Antony made clear to the enemies of Herod and Phasael that he was willing to retain the Antipatrid party. Moreover, the promotion of these two men assured him of vital support within Judaea for the implementation of unpopular measures. Already later in 41 when Antony visited the Near East on his way to Egypt, he seems to

³² That Herod and Phasael split their responsibilities as tetrarchs in a geographical way whereby Herod ruled the Galilee and Phasael Jerusalem with the surrounding region, is also regarded as a possibility by Otto (1913) 22; Abel (1952) 325-326; Schalit (1969) 69; Smallwood (1976) 50; Baumann (1983) 135. See map 3 for clarification.

³³ That the title τετράρχης lost its original meaning and was used increasingly more from the first century BC onwards to denote a ruler who had a title subordinate to the title of king, has been shown by Schwahn (1934) 1096-1098; Abel (1952) 326; Schürer (1973) 333-335 n.12; Coşkun (forthcoming).

³⁴ This is what Josephus implies in *AJ* 14.326 and *BJ* 1.244.

have imposed “heavy contributions” on Judaea, if Appian is to be believed. Although details about these tributes are opaque, Antony must have been aware that the collection of those enormous funds required loyal and dedicated officials who were willing to assist in the collection of the money, even if this provoked fierce resistance among the local population and some members of the ruling elite. Herod and Phasael had already demonstrated in 43 that they did not shun participating in the levy of the unpopular tax imposed by Cassius. Antony was probably aware of that, and, even if the promotion of the two Antipatrids was not necessary to win their loyalty, Antony had to be assured of their cooperation and at least partly for that reason have nominated them as tetrarchs.

Despite Antony’s choice to favour Herod and his brother Phasael, the anti-Antipatrid faction did not give up. Josephus reveals that when Antony arrived in Tyre, another delegation – this time reportedly consisting of one thousand members – came to meet Antony. What their grievances were has not been attested in the extant source material. Both of Josephus’ accounts inform us that Antony did not wish to meet them and allegedly resorted to military force to dispel them. Evidently, Antony supported Herod and Phasael and he did not consider their removal to be useful.³⁵

10.4 The Parthian invasion and Herod’s promotion to the kingship

The reliability and loyalty which Herod and Phasael had displayed towards Rome in previous years thus formed in all likelihood one of Antony’s main driving forces for their nomination as tetrarchs over Judaea. Doubtless there was an expectation that the allegiance of the two brothers would not falter – in particular now they had been granted new positions which bound them to Rome. Valuable

³⁵ Josephus, *AJ* 14.327-329; *BJ* 1.245-247.

as Antony anticipated Herod and Phasael to be, their appointments did not prove to be long-lasting. At some point between the winter of 41 and the spring of 40, Parthian troops led by Pacorus, the son of king Orodes II, and the Roman deserter Q. Labienus, crossed the Euphrates into Syria. Antigonus, the son of Hyrcanus' late brother Aristobulus, who had returned into exile with the prince of Chalcis after he had failed to drive out Hyrcanus two years earlier, seized the invasion as an opportunity to make once more an attempt to oust the incumbent ruler and obtain the throne for himself.³⁶ On the condition that Hyrcanus and possibly also the two Antipatrid brothers would be overthrown and Antigonus assisted in his pursuit of control over Judaea, the Parthians were offered rewards. Induced by these promises, Pacorus and the Parthian satrap Barzaphranes departed Syria and moved southwards – the former along the coast and the latter through the interior.³⁷ Pacorus also dispatched a squadron of cavalry in advance to Judaea under the command of the Cupbearer (οἰνόχοος) of the Parthian king, who was allegedly also called Pacorus.³⁸ Meanwhile, Antigonus proceeded to Jerusalem while he was joined by an increasing number of adherents. His siege of the city was met by fierce resistance from troops led by Herod and Phasael, and on a daily basis confrontations occurred between both factions.³⁹ None of the two parties succeeded to gain the upper hand, even though several of the Jews who had gathered in Jerusalem for the celebration of Passover gave support to Antigonus.⁴⁰ The deadlock was only overcome when on Antigonus' initiative Pacorus the

³⁶Antigonus took refuge with Ptolemy, the prince of Chalcis, in 49 after his elder brother Alexander and his father Aristobulus, entangled in Rome's civil war as Caesar's allies, had been assassinated in Syria by Pompey's partisans (Josephus, *AJ* 14.123-126; *BJ* 1.183-186). With the exception of a brief absence in 42 when he made a failed attempt to win a position of power in Judaea in 42, Antigonus resided with Ptolemy and, later, his son Lysanias in the Principedom of Chalcis until the Parthian invasion provided him with the opportunity with support of the new overlords in Syria to win the throne for himself.

³⁷ Josephus, *AJ* 14.330-332; *BJ* 1.248-249. In *BJ* the rewards for the Parthians are offered by Lysanias of Chalcis, whereas *AJ* has Antigonus himself promising the money and women. It is not possible to illuminate which one of these two versions is more accurate.

³⁸ Josephus, *AJ* 14.333; *BJ* 1.249.

³⁹ Josephus, *AJ* 14.334-339; *BJ* 1.250-253.

⁴⁰ Josephus, *AJ* 14.338; *BJ* 1.253.

Cupbearer entered the city – ostensibly to bring the conflict to an end, as Josephus clarifies, but in reality to assist Antigonus.⁴¹ Phasael appears not to have suspected the plot, met Pacorus and was persuaded by him to go to Barzaphranes as ambassador to discuss a termination of the conflict.⁴² Despite Herod's warning not to yield to the proposal, Phasael travelled with Hyrcanus to the Galilee, where Barzaphranes was encamped. At first cordially welcomed by the Parthian satrap with gifts, Phasael and Hyrcanus were at a later point put in chains.⁴³

For the time being, Herod had evaded arrest by staying behind, but new plans had already been devised to lure him into an ambush. As part of this scheme, Pacorus the Cupbearer was sent to Jerusalem with the instruction to entice Herod outside the city walls and capture him.⁴⁴ However, as soon as Herod learnt of his brother's and Hyrcanus' imprisonment, and suspected that a plot was being forged against him, he decided that it was no longer safe in the city and escaped Jerusalem with members of his family, soldiers and several of his associates.⁴⁵ Herod firstly proceeded southwards into the direction of Idumaea, where he dismissed the majority of his followers and accommodated his nearest relatives with about eight hundred of his troops in the fortress of Masada.⁴⁶

In the meantime, the Parthians had entered Jerusalem, ransacked the city and laid waste to other parts of the country. Fate proved to be calamitous for the imprisoned Hyrcanus and Phasael.⁴⁷ Whereas Phasael realised that he was in a

⁴¹ Josephus, *AJ* 14.340-341; *BJ* 1.254.

⁴² Josephus, *AJ* 14.341; *BJ* 1.255.

⁴³ Josephus, *AJ* 14.341-348; *BJ* 1.255-260.

⁴⁴ Josephus, *AJ* 14.348; *BJ* 1.261.

⁴⁵ Josephus, *AJ* 14.349-353; *BJ* 1.261-263.

⁴⁶ Josephus, *AJ* 14.355-362; *BJ* 1.263-267.

⁴⁷ Josephus asserts in *AJ* 14.365 and *BJ* 1.269 that Hyrcanus and Phasael were turned over to Antigonus. Yet, these claims are contradicted by *AJ* 14.366 where Hyrcanus is said to have been guarded by the Parthians when Antigonus allegedly went up to him when he was imprisoned. If Hyrcanus and Phasael had been transferred into Antigonus' hands, as Josephus explains earlier in his account and in *BJ*, why would Hyrcanus then still have been held in Parthian detention when Antigonus was about to visit him? A possible explanation for this blatant inconsistency may be Josephus' use of two different historical traditions, as Otto (1913) 25 has already proposed. According to one version, Hyrcanus and Phasael were handed over to Antigonus, whereas

desperate situation and decided to take his own life in order to forestall execution,⁴⁸ Hyrcanus did not escape penalty and saw his ears being disfigured.⁴⁹ As a result of the defacement, he was no longer suitable for holding the High Priesthood, since Jewish law forbade persons with physical defects holding that office.⁵⁰ This then paved the way for Antigonus to assume the highest sacral position in Judaea. Being a son of Hyrcanus' brother Aristobulus who had held the High Priesthood for some years in the 60s BC, Antigonus qualified in particular for taking up that post. He combined it with the kingship which the Parthians revived for Judaea and conferred upon him soon after the demise of Phasael and the incarceration of Hyrcanus.⁵¹

according to the other version the two men were held in Parthian captivity. The latter tradition is more plausible, as Otto o.c. has already convincingly argued by pointing to *AJ* 15.12-13, where Josephus briefly recalls Hyrcanus' and Phasael's seizure by Barzaphranes and Pacorus, and Hyrcanus' release from Parthian captivity. We can also refer to *BJ* 1.273 in which Hyrcanus' deportation to Parthia is mentioned. Cf. Schalit (1969) 761-764, who also gives preference to the version according to which Hyrcanus and Phasael had been captured by the Parthians, but comes up with implausible and somewhat caricatural arguments. Schalit (1969) 762 claims that if Hyrcanus had been captured by Antigonus, he would probably have been executed straightaway, since the Hasmonaeans were "im Grunde ihres Wesens harte Naturen und unbarmherzige Richter" who would not deter from "Greuelthaten", if they were able to use such atrocities to secure their power. Yet, as we shall see, this was not the fate awaiting Hyrcanus.

⁴⁸ Josephus mentions in both *AJ* and *BJ* two readings of Phasael's death. Whereas in one version (*AJ* 14.367; *BJ* 1.271) he is said to have smashed his head against a rock, according to the other version (*AJ* 14.368; *BJ* 1.272), this attempt to commit suicide is claimed to have failed, after which on Antigonus' initiative poison was applied to Phasael's wound by a physician. Which of these two interpretations is to be preferred cannot be said on the basis of our extant sources. The vague assertion made by Josephus later in his work (*AJ* 15.13) according to which Phasael died by committing suicide, is not helpful in this respect. Yet, either of the readings that Josephus presents to us is still to be preferred above the interpretation provided by the third century AD philosopher Sextus Iulius Africanus, who claims (in a fragment transmitted by Syncellus, *Chron.* 371) that Phasael had fallen in battle. As it happens, demise on the battlefield would negate the Phasael's initial captivity, which by itself is a well-attested event (Josephus, *AJ* 14.365, 15.11-13; *BJ* 1.269) that cannot easily be disregarded.

⁴⁹ Josephus, *AJ* 14.366 claims that Antigonus "cut off" ("ἀποτέμνει") Hyrcanus ears. Cf. Josephus *BJ* 1.270, who says that Antigonus "mutilated the ears with his teeth" ("τὰ ὦτα λωβᾶται τοῖς ὀδοῦσιν"). Schalit (1969) 763 points out that cutting or biting off ears was a customary penalty inflicted by Parthians (Tacitus, *Ann.* 12.14).

⁵⁰ The evidence for the exclusion of persons with physical defects from the High Priesthood consists of *Leviticus* 21.17-23; Josephus, *AJ* 3.278, 14.366.

⁵¹ Josephus, *AJ* 14.379 refers to Antigonus being appointed king (βασιλεύς) by the Parthians. Cf. *BJ* 1.273, which only mentions that "the Parthians installed Antigonus as master in Jerusalem" ("Πάρθοι καθιστᾶσιν μὲν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις Ἀντιγόνῳ τὰ πράγματα"). That Antigonus held the

Not yet aware of his brother's fate, Herod pursued his flight from Masada to Nabataea in the hope that king Malichus would be willing to offer him a gift or a loan in money which could serve as ransom to set Phasael free.⁵² Herod may have expected that his father's friendship with the king would be in his advantage. Malchus had received sums of money in deposit from Antipater, and Herod hoped at the moment to be recompensed for these benefits. However, instead of offering financial assistance, the Nabataean king ordered Herod not to visit his kingdom – according to Josephus under the pretext that the Parthians forbade him to do so, but in reality because he did not wish to repay his debts.⁵³ Whatever Malchus' main motivations were, Herod obeyed the king's instructions and continued his journey to Alexandria in Egypt, while on the way he learnt about his brother's death.⁵⁴ By now, Herod was determined to travel to Rome. Despite Cleopatra's attempts to detain him,⁵⁵ and the hibernal conditions which made

High Priesthood is affirmed by his coinage, on which he describes himself on the obverse in Aramaic as "High Priest". The reverse of those coins bears the legend "ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΟΥ", and thus attests to Antigonos' tenure of the kingship (Reifenberg (1963) 42 no.21; Hill (1965) 212-219; Schürer (1973) 605; Meshorer (2001) 218-220 nos.36-43). Cf. Dio, 48.26.2, who mistakenly claims that Antony had set up Hyrcanus' brother Aristobulus as ruler in Palestine.

⁵² For the location of Masada, see map 3.

⁵³ Josephus, *AJ* 14.370-373; *BJ* 1.274-276. Although *AJ* 14.370 informs us that the Nabataean king had received many services from Herod himself, it is more likely that these benefits had been granted by Antipater, since *BJ* proposes that "he was determined not to repay his debts to Antipater" ("κατασχεῖν προαιρούμενος τὰ παρ' Αντιπάτρου χρέα...") and *AJ* 14.372 claims that the king wanted to "withhold from Herod the sums which they had received in deposit from Antipater" ("ἀποστερήσωσι τὰς παρακαταθήκας, ἃς παρὰ Αντιπάτρου λαβόντες ἔτυχον"). In what context Antipater had provided these benefits, is unclear.

⁵⁴ Josephus, *AJ* 14.374; *BJ* 1.277.

⁵⁵ Whereas in *AJ* 14.375-376 Josephus does not provide us with an explanation why Cleopatra wished to detain Herod in Alexandria, in *BJ* 1.279 the author asserts that Cleopatra hoped to entrust Herod with a military command. Unfortunately, as no further details for this alleged command are given by Josephus and other sources do not provide us with any useful indications, it is not possible to elucidate what expedition the Ptolemaic queen intended to give to Herod. Smallwood (1976) 53 n.27 dismisses the idea of a command for Herod on the ground that there is no known hotbed to which Cleopatra would have sought to dispatch him. For the same reason, Richardson (1999) 127 n.131 has argued that the intended campaign was likely to be one of Cleopatra's own projects of which information has eluded us. However, both Smallwood and Richardson have based their views on the presumption that Herod set sail from Egypt sometime towards the end of autumn in 40. Although this date is not to be excluded, calculations made by Kokkinos (1998) 367-369 have demonstrated that Herod's journey to Rome can have set off from Alexandria as early as February in that year. Accordingly, as the chronology of Herod's return to

seafaring a hazardous enterprise, Herod left Egypt and sailed via Pamphylia and Rhodes to the harbour of Brundisium in Italy, whence he hurried to Rome.⁵⁶ There, both Antony and Octavian, who sojourned in the capital at that time, were determined to nominate Herod as king (βασιλεύς). Eventually, the Senate bestowed the kingly office (βασιλεία) upon Herod in an official meeting towards the end of the year 40, while it declared Antigonus an enemy of Rome – not only, as Josephus asserts, because of certain earlier offences,⁵⁷ but mainly “because he had received the sovereignty from the Parthians”.⁵⁸ Following the formal session in the Senate, Herod is said to have joined Antony, Octavian, the consuls and other magistrates when they went to the Capitol to make a sacrifice and deposit the decree.⁵⁹

Rome is uncertain, it is not possible to say what campaign Cleopatra intended to entrust to Herod. “The disturbances in Italy” (“κατὰ τὴν Ἰταλίαν θορύβους”) which would have left Herod undeterred when he was about to leave Egypt according to Josephus, *BJ* 1.279 (cf. *AJ* 14.276, where Josephus refers to “Italy in disorder” (“κατὰ τὴν Ἰταλίαν ἐν ταραχῇ”)), can thus refer both to the Battle of Perusia at the beginning of 40 and to the upheaval in the summer of 40 between Octavian, Antony and Sextus Pompeius which culminated in the Pact of Brundisium in September of October of that year. Possibly, Cleopatra planned to send Herod to Italy to deal with either of these two conflicts.

⁵⁶ Josephus, *AJ* 14.375-379; *BJ* 1.278-281. The exact chronology of Herod’s journey to Rome is disputed. For critical discussions of this sequence of events, see among others Kokkinos (1998) 367-369; Eckhardt (2007) 11 n.13. Cf. Kashtan (2002), who completely ignores the chronological uncertainties with regard to Herod’s journey to Rome in 40 despite the fact that the publication concentrates in part on this trip.

⁵⁷ Josephus does not explicate in both *AJ* 14.384 and *BJ* 1.284 what these earlier offences were. Marcus (1943) 651 n.g argues that Josephus in all likelihood refers to Antigonus’ role in the war led by his father Aristobulus in 49 against the Pompeian generals in Syria. Although neither Josephus nor any other source elucidates what Antigonus’ part, if any, in this conflict would have been (*AJ* 14.123-126, *BJ* 1.183-186), the lack of evidence does not exclude Antigonus’ participation in the hostilities in 49.

⁵⁸ Josephus, *AJ* 14.384: “ὅτι καὶ παρὰ Πάρθων τὴν ἀρχὴν λάβοι” (LCL transl. adapted). Cf. *BJ* 1.284, which equally claims that “he received the sovereignty from the Parthians” (“διὰ Πάρθων λάβοι τὴν ἀρχήν”, LCL transl. adapted).

⁵⁹ Josephus, *AJ* 14.379-388; *BJ* 1.281-285; Strabo, 16.2.46; Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.9; Appian, *BC* 5.75; Dio, 49.22.6. Richardson (1999) 127-128 proposes that “Antony initiated the scheme to appoint Herod king... and pressed the idea upon Octavian”. Eckhardt (2007) 16-17 argues convincingly that Octavian was hardly involved in the nomination of Herod. He refers to a speech (*BJ* 1.388) which Herod allegedly made in front of Octavian in Rhodes following the Battle of Actium, in which he purportedly identified Antony as the one who had conferred the kingship upon him. If Octavian were equally responsible for conferring the royal title upon Herod, why would Herod not have said so in this speech, in which he gave account of his past conduct? In my opinion, it seems

For Herod, the acquisition of the kingship formed, just like his three earlier promotions, another step forwards in his career entirely facilitated by Rome. It was the ultimate demonstration of trust that Rome had thus far made towards him. Whether the conferral of the royal title was what Herod envisioned to be the result of his trip, though, cannot be said with certainty because of inconsistencies in our source material. Whereas Josephus indicates in *AJ* 14.382 that Herod aspired to the kingship and promised Antony money in exchange for the royal title, in *AJ* 14.386-387 he explains that Herod proceeded to Rome, “not to ask [the kingship, ed.] for himself, for he did not believe the Romans would offer it to him, since it was custom to give it to one of the reigning family, but to claim it for his wife’s brother [Aristobulus III, ed.],⁶⁰ who was a grandson of Aristobulus [II, ed.] on his father’s side and of Hyrcanus on his mother’s”.⁶¹ Some scholars have dismissed the second version (*AJ* 14.386-387) as an attempt to acquit Herod of the accusation that he had removed the Hasmonaean dynasty from its legitimate ruling position in Judaea.⁶² They favour the account transmitted in *AJ* 14.382 according to which Herod requested the royal title for himself and used a bribe to strengthen his case, on the ground that Herod did not have an altruistic attitude and was too

therefore likely that Octavian’s role in the nomination of Herod as king was minimal, all the more in the light of our other source material on Herod’s appointment as king. Strabo, Tacitus and Appian all ignore Octavian and ascribe the installation of Herod as king to Antony. Besides, in the later *AJ* Octavian plays a less-significant role in the nomination process than in *BJ*. All in all, it seems unlikely (as claimed in *BJ*) that Octavian was more determined than Antony to grant the kingship to Herod. That does, of course, not mean that he did not support or was not enthusiastic about Herod’s nomination for the kingship.

⁶⁰ Although this brother of Herod’s fiancée Mariamme – the wedding had not yet taken place – is not named in the passage, it is very likely that Josephus refers here to Aristobulus, the only brother of Mariamme known to us.

⁶¹ Josephus, *AJ* 14.386-387: “οὐ γὰρ εἰς ἑαυτὸν... ταύτην αἰτησόμενος, οὐ γὰρ ἐνόμιζεν αὐτῷ τοὺς Ῥωμαίους παρέξειν, τοῖς ἐκ τοῦ γένους ἔθους ἔχοντας αὐτὴν δίδοναι, ἀλλὰ τῷ τῆς γυναικὸς ἀδελφῷ λαβεῖν ἀξιῶσων υἱὸν τυχάνοντι πρὸς μὲν πατρὸς Ἀριστοβούλου πρὸς δὲ μητρὸς Ὑρκανοῦ”. Cf. *BJ* 1.282-285, which does not reveal anything about Herod’s intentions.

⁶² Otto (1913) 25-26; Schalit (1969) 689; Smallwood (1976) 54; Kashner (2007) 68-69. Cf. Laqueur (1920) 195-199, who oddly claims that the second passage (*AJ* 14.386-387) is not an attempt to acquit Herod, but shows Josephus accusing Herod of trying to justify his acquisition of the kingship and the termination of Hasmonaean rule over Judaea by stating that Herod actually intended to ask the royal title for Aristobulus.

ambitious to function as a mere mentor of the young, approximately thirteen year old Aristobulus.⁶³ Some of them use a different argument and maintain that the seven days it took for the entire business in Rome to be accomplished would not have been sufficient if Herod still had to be persuaded to assume the royal title. Under the impression that the entire procedure leading up to the nomination of a king by Rome would have taken more time, they have come to the conclusion that Herod must already have aimed for the royal title before he arrived at Rome, and that in view of the kingship he may already have initiated negotiations during his recess in Rhodes.⁶⁴ Problematic as the second version transmitted by Josephus (*AJ* 14.386-387) thus appears to be, none of the pieces of supportive evidence brought forward to repudiate the view of Herod demanding the sovereignty over Judaea for Aristobulus is actually compelling. Eckhardt has already pointed out that the argument according to which Herod's selfish character would have prevented him from asking a favour for Aristobulus is highly speculative in view of it being based on presumed knowledge of Herod's personality.⁶⁵ In addition, since there is no comparative material for the time spent on the official recognition of a king in Rome (*appellatio*), it is not possible to claim that seven days would have been inadequate for Antony and Octavian to convince Herod to assume the royal title and for the Senate to pass its verdict on the proposed nomination. Besides, there is no evidence whatsoever that Herod already conducted consultations during his stay in Rhodes.⁶⁶ The idea that Herod asked the Romans a favour for Aristobulus thus cannot categorically be dismissed. What is more, there are reasons thinkable

⁶³ Schalit (1969) 690 and Smallwood (1976) 54 both use the argument based on Herod's character. That Aristobulus was about thirteen years old in 40 is based on Josephus, *AJ* 15.51 where it is said that he was seventeen years old when he assumed the High Priesthood, and on *AJ* 15.56 where reference is made to Aristobulus being no more than eighteen years of age when he died after having served for only a year. Aristobulus acceded to the High Priesthood in 35, on which see Schürer (1973) 287-288.

⁶⁴ Otto (1913) 26; Schalit (1969) 690.

⁶⁵ Eckhardt (2007) 14.

⁶⁶ For a similar view, see among others Buchheim (1960) 115 n. 159 (without argumentation); Eckhardt (2007) 24. On the official recognition of kings by Rome (*appellatio*) and the rituals on the Capitol, see Braund (1984) 23-27.

why Herod would actually have put forward Aristobulus for the kingship over Judaea.⁶⁷ The kings that Judaea had known ever since its independence from Seleucid rule in the 140s BC – Aristobulus I, Alexander Jannaeus, Hyrcanus II, Aristobulus II – had all been recruited from the same Hasmonaean family to which Aristobulus III also belonged, and had at the same time all filled the High Priesthood. In the recent past, the kingship was thus always combined with the highest sacred position in Judaea. As a descendant of a non-clerical family, Herod must have been aware that he was not eligible for the High Priesthood.⁶⁸ That Rome was willing to detach the kingship from the High Priesthood in Judaea was in all likelihood not anticipated by him. Would it thus not be much more logical for Herod to have gone to Rome to ask the kingship for the young and inexperienced Aristobulus rather than for himself? Herod could have served as an influential mentor for this youthful ruler in the same way as his father Antipater had functioned as an adviser for Hyrcanus II. Plausible as this suggestion is,⁶⁹ we have already said above that it is not possible to identify with certainty the requests that Herod made in Rome. The view according to which Herod requested the royal title in Rome for himself can, in other words, not categorically be relegated to the realm of fantasy.

Yet, whatever Herod's intentions were when he visited Rome, on Antony's initiative and with the consent of Octavian he was eventually granted the kingship during an official meeting of the Senate. What had driven both triumvirs to strive for the nomination of Herod is not entirely evident. Fortunately, Josephus provides us with several potential explanations for Antony's and Octavian's support of Herod's candidature for the Judaeian throne. In the *Jewish War*, it is claimed that Antony's determination to bestow the royal title upon Herod was

⁶⁷ Eckhardt (2007) 20-24 comes up with similar potential reasons.

⁶⁸ Wilker (2007) 30; Rocca (2008) 34.

⁶⁹ Other scholars claiming (on the basis of limited or no critical analysis) that Herod in all likelihood asked the kingship for Aristobulus are among others Buchheim (1960) 66; Stern (1974b) 221; Richardson (1999) 128; Wilker (2007) 30.

motivated by “the recollection of Antipater’s hospitality” (“μνήμην μὲν τῆς Ἀντιπάτρου ξενίας”), and by Herod’s “heroic qualities” (“τὴν... ἀρετὴν”).⁷⁰ Although Josephus does not refer to these “heroic qualities” (whatever they were) in his *Jewish Antiquities*, he does mention Antony’s “memory of Antipater’s hospitality” (“μνήμην τῆς Ἀντιπάτρου ξενίας”).⁷¹ We have already seen that the recollection of the ξενία with which Antipater had entertained Antony during his term as *praefectus equitum* under Gabinius, the proconsul of Syria between 57 and 55, had partly impelled the decision to appoint Herod and his brother Phasael as tetrarchs of Judaea in 41. That these considerations would have played a role once more a year later with the nomination to the kingship is thus not very odd. Obviously, this does not indicate that Antony’s friendly relations with Antipater formed the main driving force behind the bestowal of the royal title upon Herod. In the *Jewish Antiquities*, it has already been said that Antony’s eagerness to award the royal title was dictated “much more by his hatred towards Antigonus” than by the good relations with Antipater.⁷² For Octavian, the main reason to give at least his consent to the nomination of Herod as king was the memory of the Alexandrian War in 47 during which Antipater rendered military assistance to Julius Caesar, and the hospitality which Antipater had shown towards Octavian’s adoptive father.⁷³ Josephus adds to these motives in his *Jewish Antiquities* that Octavian would have been willing to do Antony a favour by giving his consent to the grant of kingship to Herod.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Josephus, *BJ* 1.282.

⁷¹ Josephus, *AJ* 14.381.

⁷² Josephus, *AJ* 14.382: “πολὺ μέντοι μᾶλλον διὰ τὸ πρὸς Ἀντίγονον μῖσος”. Josephus claims in the same section as well that Antony’s support for Herod was partly dictated “by the money which Herod promised to give him, if he became king” (“ὑπὸ χρημάτων ὧν αὐτῷ δώσειν Ἡρώδης, εἰ γένοιτο βασιλεύς”). Obviously, as we saw in the previous paragraph, it is doubtful whether Herod actually came to Rome to ask the royal title for himself. That Antony was prompted by a bribe to grant the kingship is thus not certain. Cf. *BJ* 1.282, which does mention the hatred towards Antigonus as well.

⁷³ Josephus, *AJ* 14.383; *BJ* 1.283.

⁷⁴ Josephus, *AJ* 14.383.

Eager as Antony and Octavian thus appear to have been, a decision about the conferral of the royal title was eventually taken by the Senate, not by the two triumvirs.⁷⁵ Although the factors allegedly prompting Antony and Octavian to favour Herod's elevation to the kingship may definitely have persuaded individual senators to support the appointment of Herod, it is much more likely that in view of the Parthian invasion of the eastern Mediterranean the ultimate choice was dictated by pragmatic motives. Rome was in need of a ruler with the necessary skills and military expertise to confront the Parthian-backed king Antigonus. Herod had already demonstrated these abilities when he served as a στρατηγός in Galilee and dealt with robbers led by a certain Ezekias.⁷⁶ A suitable member of the Hasmonaean dynasty was not available. With at most thirteen years of age, Aristobulus III was too young and inexperienced to assume the royal title and serve as military leader in the war against Antigonus. Herod was thus the only serious candidate for the kingship. Moreover, with the title of king, Rome had clearly posed him as the alternative ruler for Judaea. That Herod's nomination marked the termination of Hasmonaean rule over Judaea did probably not bother the Senate that much, all the more so since previous dynasts of this family had caused internal trouble. Although Josephus' reports of the Senatorial meeting do not point out what the decisive motive was for the grant of kingship to Herod, they *do* refer to Antony elaborating on Herod's usefulness for the war against the Parthian invaders.⁷⁷ The senators Messalla and Atratinus would even in their address to the Senate have made mention of the goodwill (εὐνοία) that Herod had shown towards Rome.⁷⁸ Pragmatic motives are thus attested in our source

⁷⁵ The third triumvir, Lepidus, seems to have been in Africa at the time of Herod's appointment: Appian, *BCiv.* 5.53; Dio, 48.20.4.

⁷⁶ Josephus, *AJ* 14.158-162; *BJ* 1.201-207.

⁷⁷ Josephus, *AJ* 14.385; *BJ* 1.284.

⁷⁸ Josephus, *AJ* 14.384. No parallel in *BJ*.

material, and it is very likely that they played a crucial role behind the Senate's decision to award the kingship to Herod.⁷⁹

10.5 Herod's return to Judaea, Roman support and the intervention at Samosata

The newly-received kingship had established Herod in a more powerful position to confront Antigonus, his Parthian-backed enemy.⁸⁰ With the intention to expel his rival from the throne and to take ultimate control over his kingdom, Herod departed from Rome and travelled to Ptolemais in Phoenicia, where he most likely arrived towards the end of the winter season in the year 39.⁸¹ At that time, the Roman general P. Ventidius Bassus was engaged in curbing the disturbances that the Parthians had caused to arise in cities of Rome's eastern provinces, while the command over a small contingent of soldiers in Judaea was in the hands of Poppaedi Silo, possibly a legate of Antony.⁸² With a considerable force of native and foreign troops, which he had acquired upon arrival in Ptolemais, Herod progressed into the Galilee, succeeded to make it almost entirely allegiant to him, and set out to rescue his family from the fortress of Masada, which lay under siege of Antigonus' forces. As Herod found on his way the city of Joppa to be hostile towards him and allegedly wished to eliminate the threat of a possible attack in the rear, he captured it before continuing his march to Masada.⁸³ After Herod had successfully liberated his family, and saw his forces being augmented with

⁷⁹ Similar conclusion and arguments by Otto (1913) 26; Schalit (1969) 85-87; Stern (1974b) 221; Smallwood (1976) 55; Bauman (1983) 147-148; Eckhardt (2007) 17-18.

⁸⁰ It is not my aim to give a full description of Herod's conquest of Judaea. For a detailed narrative of the war against Antigonus with references to sources, see among others Schalit (1969) 88-97; Shatzman (1991) 150-169 (especially with regard to the military aspect); Richardson (1999) 153-162; Kasher (2007) 72-86.

⁸¹ Josephus, *AJ* 14.394; *BJ* 1.290.

⁸² Josephus, *AJ* 14.395; *BJ* 1.291: although Josephus does not make it explicit in which cities Ventidius undertook the suppression of disturbances, as the latter had already left Judaea (*AJ* 14.393; *BJ* 1.289), it is clear that he either quelled the insurgencies in Syria or in Asia Minor. On the official position of Poppaedi Silo, see Broughton (1952) 389.

⁸³ Josephus, *AJ* 14.394-397; *BJ* 1.290-293. The origin of "the considerable force of foreigners" ("δύναμιν οὐκ ὀλίγην ξένων"), mentioned in *AJ* 14.394 and *BJ* 1.290 is unknown to us.

inhabitants of Masada and perhaps even with people from the wider Dead Sea region, he advanced to Jerusalem to subdue Antigonus, and was joined by Silo and his army.⁸⁴ Hostilities between both parties were underway when towards the beginning of the winter in 39 Silo persuaded some of his soldiers to “cry aloud about the lack of provisions, to demand money for food, and to insist that they be taken to suitable quarters for wintering, since the region about the city was a waste as a result of the ravaging by Antigonus’ soldiers...”⁸⁵ Josephus explains that Herod collected provisions from other parts of the country as an attempt to change the soldiers’ minds so that they would not desert him.⁸⁶ These supplies, however, failed to achieve the desired effect, and Herod was forced to dismiss the Roman army in Idumaea, the Galilee and Samaria, districts which were on his side.⁸⁷ As to the reasons behind the retreat into the winter quarters, Josephus reveals that Silo was induced by money that Antigonus offered him.⁸⁸ In the hope to win Antony’s favour, Antigonus had allegedly offered another bribe to Silo and succeeded in inducing him to station a part of his army in Lydda, a city on the west frontier of Judaea proper.⁸⁹ Whether these allegations of bribery are justified

⁸⁴ Josephus, *AJ* 14.398-400; *BJ* 1.294.

⁸⁵ Josephus, *AJ* 14.406: “(...) σπάνιν τῶν ἐπιτηδείων καταβοᾶν καὶ χρήματα εἰς τροφὰς αἰτεῖν, καὶ χειμάσσοντας ἀπάγειν εἰς τοὺς ἐπιτηδείους τόπους, τῶν περὶ τὴν πόλιν ὄντων ἐπήμων διὰ τὸ ὑπὸ τῶν Ἀντιγόνου στρατιωτῶν ἀνεκευᾶσθαι ...”. Josephus, *BJ* 1.297 mentions the outcry (σπάνις) of the soldiers and the two demands as well.

⁸⁶ Josephus, *AJ* 14.408-410; *BJ* 1.299-301.

⁸⁷ Josephus, *AJ* 14.411; *BJ* 1.302. Although Josephus does not make it explicit that Herod had no other choice than to dismiss his soldiers, that Herod did not have any other choice seems to be logical in the light of the efforts that he had made to keep the Roman troops with him. The inhabitants of the city of Samaria and the surrounding district had in all likelihood become friendly towards Herod at some point after he had returned from Rome, since Josephus informs us that he instructed them to provide him with cattle, wine, oil corn and other things with which he hoped to appease the demands of Silo and his army (Josephus, *AJ* 14.408; *BJ* 1.299).

⁸⁸ Josephus, *AJ* 14.406: “Then it was that Silo showed openly that he had taken a bribe” (“Τότε καὶ Σίλων ἀπεκαλύψατο τὴν δωροδοκίαν”); 14.395: “... Silo in Judaea having been corrupted with money by Antigonus” (“...Σίλων δ’ ἐν Ἰουδαίᾳ χρήμασιν ὑπ’ Ἀντιγόνου διεφθαρμένος”, LCL transl. adapted); *BJ* 1.297: “And now Silo’s conduct betrayed his corruption” (“Ἐνθα δὲ Σίλων ἀπεκαλύψατο τὴν δωροδοκίαν”); 1.291: “... Silo in Judaea having been corrupted with money by Antigonus” (“...Σίλων δ’ ἐν Ἰουδαίᾳ χρήμασιν ὑπ’ Ἀντιγόνου διεφθαρμένος”, LCL transl. adapted).

⁸⁹ Josephus, *AJ* 14.412; *BJ* 1.302.

cannot be clarified.⁹⁰ What has become clear is that Silo – and also Ventidius during his brief visit to Judaea earlier in 39 – did not put all effort in ousting Antigonus from the throne.⁹¹ Apparently, an official decree of the Senate, which was backed by at least two of the three triumvirs (Antony and Octavian), and declared a foreign ruler an enemy of Rome, could not be enforced throughout the entire empire in a period when the eastern Mediterranean was in great distress as a result of an invasion. Commanders and other officials could act in contradiction to the decisions made by the key organs of the Roman state realising that they would probably not face any serious repercussions for their behaviour.⁹²

Abandoned by the Roman troops who had retreated into their winter quarters, Herod dispatched his brother Joseph to Idumaea, lodged his own family in Samaria, and advanced into the Galilee, where he succeeded to expel the remaining garrisons of Antigonus and managed to defeat the brigands who operated from caves.⁹³ Josephus informs us that Ventidius asked Silo and Herod to join him in Syria in the war against the Parthians, after they would have completed the conflicts in the Galilee. However, Herod is said to have dismissed Silo and conducted the war against the bandits himself.⁹⁴ The reason behind the decision is difficult to gauge, but it is probably related to the fact that Silo had earlier on deserted Herod and was no longer regarded as a trustworthy ally.

Following the final defeat of the Parthians in 38, on Antony's instructions Ventidius dispatched a certain Machaeras with two legions and two thousand

⁹⁰ Cf. Schalit (1969) 89, 691, who argues that the allegations of bribery are probably accurate.

⁹¹ Josephus claims that Ventidius extorted money from Antigonus when he was in Judaea (*AJ* 14.392-393; *BJ* 1.288-289). If we can trust this allegation, then it is very understandable why Ventidius did not make any effort to expel Antigonus.

⁹² Cf. Schalit (1969) 691, who argues that Ventidius and Silo did not assist Herod in removing Antigonus because Antony was far away in Athens, and because the envoy Q. Dellius dispatched by Antony to Ventidius and Silo with instructions to support Herod had apparently not informed them of the orders. Although the first explanation given by Schalit is plausible, the second one seems to contradict *AJ* 14.394 and *BJ* 1.290, where Josephus explicitly says that Dellius convinced Ventidius and Silo to render assistance to Herod. The difficulty of enforcing all decisions made in Rome throughout the empire is discussed in more detail in chapter 17.2.

⁹³ Josephus, *AJ* 14.413-433; *BJ* 1.303-316.

⁹⁴ Josephus, *AJ* 14.420-421; *BJ* 1.309.

horsemen to Herod to support him.⁹⁵ Unfortunately for Herod, though, the new commander did not prove to be of much help. Having supposedly been offered bribes, Machaeras went to see Antigonus and was unexpectedly repulsed by him with armed force. Allegedly enraged about the hostile reception, “[Machaeras, ed.] withdrew to the city of Emmaus and slaughtered all the Judaeans whom he met on the way, whether friends or foes”.⁹⁶ Details about this killing spree are not preserved in our sources, but Josephus clarifies that Herod was “irritated” (“παροξυνθείς”) by Machaeras’ armed aggression and accordingly decided to inform Antony in person about the lack of support he had received.⁹⁷ The triumvir was at that time involved in a war against king Antiochus of Commagene who had granted shelter to Parthian refugees unable to return to their own land after defeat of the Parthians near Gindarus.⁹⁸ The king was besieged in his capital Samosata and still managed to resist the Romans when Herod arrived.⁹⁹ Eventually, though, the hostilities were brought to an end. Josephus claims in his *Jewish War* that it was Herod who actually managed to terminate the siege – a claim that seems to be exaggerated in the light of our other two sources, Dio and Plutarch, who both reveal that the hostilities had stopped by some sort of negotiation between Antiochus and Antony.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, in the *Jewish Antiquities*, nothing is said of Herod participating in the attack on Samosata. Whatever Herod’s involvement was in the conflict against Antiochus, following the end of the aggression, Rome finally had military power available that could be employed in Judaea. Antony appointed C. Sosius, the future consul of 32, to the province of Syria and gave him the task to support Herod in gaining control over his

⁹⁵ Josephus, *AJ* 14.434; *BJ* 1.317.

⁹⁶ Josephus, *AJ* 14.435-436: “ἀνεχώρει μὲν εἰς Ἀμμαοῦν πόλιν, οἷς δὲ κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν Ἰουδαίους περιετύγγχανε τούτους ἀπέσφαττεν ἐχθρούς τε καὶ φίλους” (LCL transl. adapted). *BJ* 1.318-319 also mentions the assassination of the Judaeans.

⁹⁷ Josephus, *AJ* 14.437; *BJ* 1.320.

⁹⁸ On the war against Antiochus of Commagene in 38, see chapter 16.2.

⁹⁹ Josephus, *AJ* 14.445-447; *BJ* 1.322.

¹⁰⁰ Josephus, *AJ* 14.322; Dio, 49.22.1-2; Plutarch, *Ant.* 34.4.

kingdom.¹⁰¹ Eventually, thanks to renewed Roman military assistance, Herod managed in the course of 37 to defeat his enemy at Jerusalem and to get hold of his realm.¹⁰²

10.6 Antony between Cleopatra and Herod

With the defeat of Antigonus in the summer of 37, Herod finally came into the possession of the kingdom which had been conferred upon him three years earlier. Although the exact extent of his realm at this stage is unknown to us, it encompassed in all likelihood the districts Judaea, the Galilee, Peraea, the eastern part of Idumaea, and Samaria (though not including the homonymous city).¹⁰³ It is not clear whether the payment of tribute or any other regular tax was imposed on Herod's newly conquered kingdom, as had been the case with Judaea following the reorganisation by Pompey in 63. Although Appian mentions Herod in a list along with three other kings who were to pay a contribution to Rome as exchange for the kingship, his statement may refer to a one-time fee rather than to a regular land or capital tax.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Josephus, *AJ* 14.447; *BJ* 1.322.

¹⁰² Josephus, *AJ* 14.448-491; *BJ* 1.323-357; Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.9; Dio, 49.22.3-6.

¹⁰³ Although the precise geographical extent of Herod's realm at the end of the war in 37 is not attested anywhere, it is possible on the basis of our knowledge of the conquests made during the conflict with Antigonus in the first place, and of the territories that Octavian awarded Herod in the year 30 in the second place, to establish roughly over what district Herod's rule stretched. Josephus, *AJ* 15.217 and *BJ* 1.396 informs us that when Octavian came to Egypt after the death of Cleopatra and Antony, he granted Gaza, Anthedon (both in western Idumaea), Joppa, Strato's Tower, Gadara, Hippos and Samaria to Herod. Samaria (Σαμαρεία) in this context refers in all likelihood to the city and not to the district, because all the other places enumerated by Josephus are cities. Moreover, the region Samaria had already been under control when Herod dismissed Silo and his armies to their winter quarters towards the end of 39 (In *AJ* 14.411 and *BJ* 1.302). Cf. Richardson (1999) 131 who fails to provide arguments for his claim according to which the district of Samaria was only given to Herod in 30.

¹⁰⁴ Appian, *BCiv.* 5.75 informs us that Herod had to pay a tribute (φόρος) for being set up as king "over the Idumaeans and Samaritans" ("Ἰδουμαίων δὲ καὶ Σαμαρέων). It is unclear, though, whether the reference is here to a recurrent tax or to a one-off levy. Moreover, Appian only mentions the Idumaeans and Samaritans, suggesting that the payment due to Antony was only in exchange for the rule over Idumaea and the district of Samaria. Cf. Schalit (1969) 161-162, who

A year after Herod had defeated Antigonus and taken control over his kingdom, he had to face a misfortune when Antony awarded Cleopatra the coastal cities from the Eleutherus River in the north to Egypt in the south, with the exception of Tyre and Sidon.¹⁰⁵ As we have seen in a previous chapter, Cleopatra seems to have had the ambition to expand her kingdom with those territories in the Near East which formerly constituted a part of the Ptolemaic Kingdom. She probably considered her relationship with Antony to be a suitable instrument for the fulfilment of this plan. As a result of the grant of this request, though, Herod was deprived of vital access to the sea – a loss that will have had serious consequences for the economic situation in Judaea. Yet, despite the territorial rearrangement in favour of Cleopatra, Antony's relationship with Herod does not seem to have deteriorated too severely. Even the further loss of lands two years later did not affect the bond beyond repair. In 37/36, Antony granted the balsam-groves around Jericho to Cleopatra as part of a grand-scale reorganisation of the Near East and Asia Minor, known as the Donations of Alexandria. For a high rent of 200 talents a year, Herod leased it in addition to portions of Nabataea from the Ptolemaic queen. Furthermore, the Judaeian king stood surety for the payment that the Nabataean king Malichus was due to Cleopatra.¹⁰⁶ Whether or not the decision to have Herod standing surety for the charges that Malichus owed Cleopatra was designed to engender conflict between the two kings, the relations between the two kings did deteriorate, as we shall see further below.

believes that Appian's passage is corrupt, and that we ought to read Ἰουδαίων instead of Ἰδουμαίων. Schalit cannot believe that Antony would only demand money for a part of the kingdom and has therefore argued for the change in the text. Pastor (1997) 106 believes that Roman taxes were probably still levied from 37 onwards. Schalit (1969) 161-162 argues on the basis of Appian, *BCiv.* 5.75 that Herod had to pay tax for the districts Judaea and Samaria.

¹⁰⁵ For a detailed discussion with references of the grant of Judaeian territories to Cleopatra, see chapter 9.3.

¹⁰⁶ On the loss of Nabataean territories to Cleopatra and the contribution that Malichus had to pay, see chapter 9.3 and chapter 13.2.

With regard to Ptolemaic territorial ambitions, Antony thus showed willingness to meet Cleopatra's demands. This goodwill did not, however, manifest itself in all cases of conflicting interest between Cleopatra and Herod. The strife between the Ptolemaic queen and the Judaeian king in the aftermath of the death of Aristobulus III in 35 or 34, for example, was settled by Antony in favour of Herod. The origin of this friction dates back to 37 when Herod appointed Hananel, a Babylonian Jew of sacerdotal lineage, as High Priest.¹⁰⁷ Although Hyrcanus had been released from Parthian captivity, he was no longer suitable for this position as a result of the physical defect that he had incurred in the wake of the Parthian invasion of Judaea in 40. Herod himself lacked the necessary qualifications to assume this office in the light of his descent from a non-priestly family.¹⁰⁸ Alexandra, Herod's mother-in-law, and Mariamme, Herod's wife, criticised the choice of a High Priest from Babylonia while a legitimate candidate for the highest sacred position in Judaea from their own Hasmonaean line was available in the person of their son and brother Aristobulus III. They therefore urged Herod to depose Hananel and nominate this Aristobulus as High Priest instead. Alexandra is even said by Josephus to have asked Cleopatra to enquire whether Antony would be willing to persuade Herod to appoint Aristobulus. Although it is unclear how much pressure Antony put on Herod, probably in 35 the Judaeian king ultimately complied with the request and removed Hananel and nominated Aristobulus as his replacement.¹⁰⁹ Yet, however much the promotion of a Hasmonaean to the High Priesthood had appeased Alexandra and Mariamme, the amity did not last for long. About a year after his instalment, Aristobulus is said to have drowned in a swimming pool while attending a banquet in Jericho. Alexandra accused Herod

¹⁰⁷ Josephus, *AJ* 15.22.

¹⁰⁸ Herod was the son of the Idumaean Antipater and of Cypros "a woman of a distinguished family from Arabia [i.e. Nabataea, ed]" (Josephus, *BJ* 1.181: "γυναῖκα τῶν ἐπισήμων ἐξ Ἀραβίας"; *AJ* 14.121). On the appointment of the High Priest by Herod, see Rocca (2008) 282-283, who explains that Herod's selection of a candidate from the Diaspora was dictated by the potential threat that a High Priest from Judaea (especially from the Hasmonaean family) could pose to the position of the new king.

¹⁰⁹ Josephus, *AJ* 15.21-38.

and managed through her connection with Cleopatra to have Herod summoned to Antony in Laodicea to give account of his role in Aristobulus' demise. Josephus informs us that by means of a bribe he succeeded in being acquitted.¹¹⁰ Whether or not money was in play here, it is much more likely that Antony's decision to exonerate Herod was dictated by pragmatic motives. No suitable alternative ruler was available to replace Herod; moreover the new king had demonstrated his loyalty in the past to many different Roman representatives in the East.¹¹¹ Yet, whatever prompted Antony to free Herod, the episode shows at least how dependent Herod's position had become on Antony as Rome's representative in the East. Even for an internal Judaeian affair, he had to give account to Rome.

10.7 Actium and Herod in war with Malichus of Nabataea

The political relations between Rome and Judaea as they unfolded following Herod's absolution in 35 or 34 remain largely shrouded in mist until Antony the advent of the war against Octavian in 31. Probably as a result of the good relationship between both rulers and the benefits which Herod had received from Antony, Herod intended to send troops to Antony's support for the conflict against Antony. On Cleopatra's advice, however, Antony decided to decline the offer of assistance and ordered Herod to begin a war against the Nabataean king. Josephus explains that the Ptolemaic queen hoped in this way to extend her hegemony over either Judaea or Arabia depending on the outcome of the war.¹¹² Plausible as this explanation is, the ambition of the Ptolemaic queen to extend her control was in all likelihood not the only motive behind the order given to Herod. Josephus informs us in his *Jewish Antiquities* that Malichus had overdue payments to Cleopatra and that Herod had himself already planned to undertake an expedition into

¹¹⁰ Josephus, *AJ* 15.62-87.

¹¹¹ Similar views by Schalit (1969) 113-114 and Smallwood (1976) 66 among others.

¹¹² Josephus, *AJ* 15.110; *BJ* 1.364-365.

Nabataea, but refrained from doing so only when he heard about a looming confrontation between Octavian and Antony in Greece.¹¹³ As explained above, Herod stood surety for Malichus' debts and was thus desperate to ensure that the terms of the agreement with the Ptolemaic queen would be fulfilled. One of Cleopatra's main concerns must have been the retrieval of those outstanding debts. From that perspective, it is not odd that she prompted Antony to instruct Herod to launch a punitive expedition against Malichus, all the more since the queen and her paramour were in the process of gathering troops and resources for the war against Octavian and would thus not have had the opportunity to recover the debt themselves.

Conclusion

The war against Malichus was protracted and for a long time none of the two sides managed to inflict a decisive defeat upon the other until in the course of 31 the tables turned in favour of Herod and the conflict ended in Judaeian victory.¹¹⁴ In the meantime, the Battle of Actium had already taken place and Herod was concerned that he would face penalties by Octavian for his friendly relations with Antony. Fortunately for Herod, Octavian confirmed him in his position when he went to see him in Rhodes in 30, and later in Egypt returned him the territories that had been given to Cleopatra and even added several other cities in addition.¹¹⁵ Despite his support for Octavian's enemy, Herod was apparently still regarded to be a suitable ruler of Judaea, especially as he had shown himself to have been a loyal supporter of any Roman that held supremacy in the Near East. During the ten years that Antony held the supreme power over the eastern Mediterranean,

¹¹³ Josephus, *AJ* 15.107-110.

¹¹⁴ For more details on the course of the war between Herod and Malichus, see among others Smallwood (1976) 67.

¹¹⁵ Josephus, *AJ* 15.187-195, 217; *BJ* 1.387-393, 396-397.

the triumvir must have been aware that Herod was an asset for Rome. In those circumstances where Herod was in conflict with Alexandra, his wife Mariamme or other members of Judaea's ruling elite, Antony manifested himself as a staunch supporter of Herod. Yet, the loss of territories to Cleopatra also demonstrates that Antony did not refrain from taking away territories from Herod's realm. Clearly, Judaea was regarded as an extension of the Roman Empire. The new king, on the other hand, realised that his position depended entirely on his faithfulness towards Rome and that his freedom to act was restricted. This moral obligation to support Antony is demonstrated most clearly in Herod's intention to support Antony at Actium.

11 PRINCEDOM OF CHALCIS

In Part II.A we saw how the Princedom of Chalcis, possibly pressurised by the Parthians, supported the renegade Q. Caecilius Bassus in his revolt in Syria. No other political contact is known to have taken place. How the relations with Rome developed after Philippi up till the Battle of Actium needs to be considered at present. Of particular interest in this respect is Parthia's influence on these bilateral relations.

11.1 Antony in the East

Following the Battle of Philippi, Octavian returned to Italy and took on the distribution of land among the veteran soldiers, while Antony stayed in Greece for the remainder of the year, and advanced in the spring of 41 into Asia Minor, from where he made a journey through Anatolia and the Near East. On his tour, Antony dealt, among other things, with diplomatic matters, engaged in judicial affairs, and levied contributions with which the rewards promised to the troops were to be financed.¹ In order to secure sufficient funds, the triumvir did not, however, merely target the subjects in Rome's provinces. Even some of the kingdoms and principalities in the eastern Mediterranean appear to have been used as a source of wealth. Of all the ancient authors, Appian is most elaborate in this respect and provides us with an, albeit inexhaustive, list of geographical regions affected by Antony's measures. Some of those regions, such as Galatia and Cappadocia, stood under royal domination during the time of the events described, whereas others came either partially or entirely under Roman

¹ Dio, 48.2.2-4; Plutarch, *Ant.* 23.1; Appian, *BCiv.* 5.3-8; Suetonius, *Aug.* 13.3; Josephus, *AJ* 14.301; *BJ* 1.242. On the land allotments, the collection of funds and the former supporters of Brutus and Cassius, see chapter 10.1.

provincial rule.² Of particular interest to us is the reference to Ituraea (Ἰτουραία), by which toponym the author may have denoted territories that in the year 41 were governed by Ptolemy, son of Mennaeus. Although there is no trace of Ptolemy having represented himself publicly as ruler of the Ituraeans, it is clear, as illustrated above, that his realm comprised, besides the city of Chalcis and the Beqā' valley, portions of the Lebanon mountain ranges which were inhabited by Ituraeans among others.³ It is, however, important to point out that not all the Ituraeans inhabited lands at this time that came under the control of the prince of Chalcis. Ituraean presence has also been attested in the northern part of Mount Lebanon, where another Ptolemy appears to have ruled over a different principality, possibly centred at the settlement of Acra.⁴ This sovereign is said to have been the son of a certain Sohaemus and to have supplied Caesar with aid during his involvement in the Ptolemaic succession crisis at Alexandria in 47.⁵ Nothing more is heard about this prince. Yet, it is not impossible for him still to have been on the throne in 41. When Appian thus mentions Antony's imposition of contributions on Ἰτουραία, it cannot be excluded that the principalities of both Ptolemies were forced to make financial transfers. Certainty can, however, not be attained, all the more since the toponym Ἰτουραία and its Latin equivalent *Ituraea* seem to signify, despite its infrequent use, different territories to different classical authors.⁶ Thus, as Aliquot has adequately stated, "l'identification d'une Iturée strictement ou vaguement circonscrite ne semble pas possible".⁷ The fact that some of the territories where the Ituraeans had settled were simultaneously occupied by other peoples, may have contributed to this divergence. Equally vital in this respect were the multiple territorial changes implemented in the Lebanon

² Appian, *BCiv.* 5.7.

³ See chapter 1.6.

⁴ Aliquot (1999-2003) 237-241. On the locations of Ituraean settlement, see among others: *ibid.* 198-205; Schottroff (1982) 130-137.

⁵ Josephus, *AJ* 14.129; cf. *BJ* 1.188, which mentions Ptolemy, but does not specify that he was the son of a Sohaemus.

⁶ Aliquot (1999-2003) 191-198 provides an overview and critical discussion of the relevant evidence.

⁷ Aliquot (1999-2003) 191.

Mountain ranges and the Hauran.⁸ Yet, despite these uncertainties, there is a possibility that Appian in the aforementioned passage denoted those districts inhabited by the Ituraeans when he used the toponym Ἰτουραία. In that case, the two Ptolemies do not seem to have been able to evade the contributions that Antony had imposed on several Anatolian and Near Eastern kingdoms and principalities.

Whether or not the Princedom of Chalcis in the end was obliged to share the financial burden that had been imposed on a large part of the eastern Mediterranean, it is evident that Antony did not merely engage in the exaction of money, the confiscation of goods and supplies. In response to embassies that came to him from various parts of Anatolia and the Near East, he also dealt with judicial affairs.⁹ In a previous chapter, we saw, for example, that during his visit in Ephesus, Antony was approached by an embassy requesting the restoration of certain annexed territories and Judaeans who had been taken captive when Cassius dominated the Near East.¹⁰ Antony granted the demand, and informed the Judaeans ἐθνάρχης Hyrcanus about it in a letter that had been transmitted by Josephus.¹¹ In this letter, the names of the envoys appear who participated as a member in the deputation sent to Antony. Apart from Lysimachus, son of Pausanias, and Alexander, son of Theodorus, a certain Josephus, son of Mennaëus, is named. Sullivan has made the incredible suggestion on the basis of the appearance of the same patronymic that this Josephus might have been the brother of Ptolemy, the ruler of Chalcis.¹² The implausibility of this idea is patent in the light of the good relations which Ptolemy had maintained since the year 49 with the Hasmonaean prince Antigonus, who in 42, following Cassius' departure from the Near East to prepare for the war against the triumvirs, had made an

⁸ For these explanations, see Aliquot (1999-2003) 197-198.

⁹ See chapter 10.1.

¹⁰ For more details, see chapter 10.2

¹¹ Josephus, *AJ* 14.306-313 contains the letter.

¹² Sullivan (1990) 207.

attempt to deprive Hyrcanus of the throne with the assistance of Ptolemy himself.¹³ Although the challenge to obtain control over Judaea eventually failed, Ptolemy's involvement in the unsuccessful coup is indicative of his enmity towards Hyrcanus. It is therefore highly unlikely that Ptolemy allowed a relative of his to function as an envoy on an embassy sent by Hyrcanus with the aim to obtain certain benefits from Antony. The Josephus, son of Mennaeus, mentioned in the letter allegedly sent by Antony to Hyrcanus, is probably a highly placed figure in the Judaeian state, or, less likely, a rebellious brother of Ptolemy.

11.2 The Parthian invasion, the death of Ptolemy and the ascension of Lysanias

As we saw above, at some point between the winter of 41 and the spring of 40, Parthian troops led by Pacorus, the son of king Orodes II, and the Roman deserter Q. Labienus crossed the Euphrates into the province of Syria, where they split their forces. Labienus took on the war against the legate L. Decidius Saxa, and continued his march westwards across Asia Minor. Pacorus, on the other hand, moved to the south from Syria, conquering the Phoenician coastal cities with the exception of Tyre and invading Judaea along with the Parthian satrap Barzaphranes.¹⁴ Josephus explains that around this time Ptolemy died – probably of natural causes – and was succeeded as ruler of Chalcis by his son Lysanias.¹⁵ Soon after the succession, the new monarch appears to have concluded friendship with the Hasmonaean prince Antigonus, who already since 49 upon the assassination of his brother Alexander had lived along with his sister Alexandra in

¹³ Josephus, *AJ* 14.297-300.

¹⁴ On the Parthian invasion, see chapter 8.1.

¹⁵ Josephus, *AJ* 14.330. Neither Josephus nor any other sources provide us with any indication concerning the cause of Ptolemy's death. Yet, it seems likely that Ptolemy died as a result of old age, all the more since the beginning of his reign can at least be dated back as far as the year 85.

exile with the rulers of Chalcis.¹⁶ As a possible token of the newly concluded friendship, Lysanias may have persuaded Barzaphranes “by the promise of a thousand talents and five hundred women, to bring back Antigonus and raise him to the throne, after deposing Hyrcanus”.¹⁷ Certainty cannot, however, be attained concerning this version of the events as described by Josephus in the *Jewish War*, all the more since the author explains in the later *Jewish Antiquities* that it was Antigonus himself who had held out the prospect of the women and financial resources to the Parthians.¹⁸

Yet, whoever made the promises in the end, it is clear that Lysanias was a supporter of the Hasmonaean cause and as such stood opposite the Romans who in the same year had decided to raise Herod to the kingship. From that perspective it is difficult to lend credence to a statement made by Dio, according to which Antony made Lysanias king (βασιλεύς).¹⁹ The author refers to this occasion when he recounts Lysanias’ execution and other events that occurred in 36. Lysanias’ alleged elevation to the kingship would thus have taken place prior to this year. Possibly, the prince of Chalcis had abrogated his support for Antigonus specifically, and the Hasmonaean cause in general at some point after the Roman proconsul P. Ventidius Bassus had ousted the Parthians from Syria in 38.²⁰ Such a change of loyalty could indeed have prompted the triumvir to recognise Lysanias as king over Chalcis and the possessions that his father held in the Beqā’ and Lebanon Mountains. However, would we, in that case, not have expected Lysanias

¹⁶ Josephus, *AJ* 14.124-126 and *BJ* 1.184-186 relates that Antigonus and his sisters were escorted to Chalcis at some point following the assassination of his father Aristobulus and his brother Alexander at the hand of Pompey’s partisans in 49. The author also informs us in the same passages that one of Ptolemy’s sons, Philippion, married Alexandra, a sister of Antigonus. After Philippion had been put to death by his father, it was Ptolemy himself who married Alexandra. For a plausible political interpretation of the assassination, see Aliquot (1999-2003) 259.

¹⁷ Josephus, *BJ* 1.248: “... ὑποσχέσει χιλίων ταλάντων καὶ πεντακοσίων γυναικῶν καταγαγεῖν ἐπὶ τὰ βασίλεια τὸν Ἀντίγονον, καταλῦσαι δὲ τὸν Ὑρκανόν”.

¹⁸ Josephus, *AJ* 14.331.

¹⁹ Dio, 49.32.5.

²⁰ Similar argument in Sullivan (1990) 207. Cf. Aliquot (1999-2003) 259, who believes that Lysanias remained faithful to Antigonus until his death in 37, despite the fact that our extant documentation leaves open a potential earlier desertion of the Hasmonaean king.

to display his new position publicly on his coinage – by far the most useful and powerful medium to disseminate a public image on a wide scale? None of the limited types of coin issues that can be allocated to his reign do enclose any indications of a kingship conferred upon Lysanias. On the contrary, the two types that explicitly mention the prince's name refer to him by the same titles as the ones carried by his father: τετράρχης and ἀρχιερέυς.²¹ Obviously, since these two issues are undated, it cannot be denied that they were struck before Antony is alleged to have elevated Lysanias to the kingship. The two other coin types that belong to the reign of Lysanias have been dated to the year 40 and it is indeed possible that the issues mentioning the two titles that the prince carried were struck in the same year. Dio's statement according to which Antony granted the kingship to Lysanias can thus not be refuted, all the more since Porphyry refers – albeit in a different context – to Lysanias as king.²²

11.3 The Princedom of Chalcis annexed by Cleopatra

Whether Lysanias had been granted the royal title by Antony or not, it is certain that he could not enjoy his position of power for a long period of time. Probably at some point in the year following the defeat and execution of Antigonus in 37, the triumvir had Lysanias put to death, and his former principality awarded to Cleopatra.²³ The acquisition of the region around Chalcis constituted merely a part of much vaster territories that were granted to her by Antony. Cleopatra seems to have had the ambition to expand her kingdom with those territories in the Near

²¹ Kindler (1993) 287, nos. 12 (abbreviated title) and 13 (full title).

²² Porphyry, *BNJ* 260 F2 (17). Cf. Schmitt (1982) 112, who finds it odd that Dio and Porphyry style Lysanias as king, "denn er hatte es mit den Parthern gehalten oder doch eine zweideutige Rolle gespielt...". Schürer (1973) 565, however, claims that "later writers often apply the title βασιλεύς to tetrarchs as well". This would be another reason to doubt the elevation of Lysanias to the kingship as claimed by Dio.

²³ See chapter 9.3.

East which formerly constituted a part of the Ptolemaic Kingdom.²⁴ According to Josephus, she “accused Lysanias, the son of Ptolemy, of bringing in the Parthians against the interests of the (Roman) government...”.²⁵ It remains opaque whether Antony was eventually convinced by this argument to remove Lysanias from his position of power. While there are sufficient indications that Lysanias had been at good terms with Antigonus, there is no firm evidence available to support the view that Lysanias had brought in the Parthians. As far as our source material is concerned, the prince of Chalcis may, at the most, have induced the Parthians to support Antigonus in his attempt to gain the kingship over Judaea. Moreover, if Lysanias had been confirmed in his position of power by Antony at some point after he had made an alliance with Antigonus in the year 40, then any remorse that the triumvir may have felt towards Lysanias for his support of the Parthian invaders and the Hasmonaean prince must already have subsided. The aid reputedly given to the Parthians can from this perspective at the most have served as a mere pretext for the deposition and assassination of the prince of Chalcis, as well as for the subsequent conferral of the former principality to Cleopatra.²⁶ Nonetheless, the possibility cannot be excluded that Lysanias was actively involved in an alliance with the Parthians, and that Antony for these reasons may have consented to Cleopatra’s wish to have Lysanias removed.

The Egyptian queen would retain control over the territories with which she had been endowed by Antony until the Battle of Actium in 31. A certain Zenodoros is attested to have ruled the Princedom of Chalcis subsequently.²⁷ The earliest of his three known coin types can be dated to the year 31/30 and carries

²⁴ See chapter 9.3.

²⁵ Josephus, *AJ* 15.92: “Λυσανίαν μὲν οὖν τὸν Πτολεμαίου Πάρθους αἰτιασαμένη τοῖς πράγμασιν ἐπάγειν ἀποκτίννυσιν...” (LCL transl. adapted).

²⁶ So also Sullivan (1990) 207 and Aliquot (1999-2003) 261.

²⁷ Schürer and Seyrig have identified our Zenodorus with a certain “Zenodorus, son of the tetrarch Lysanias mentioned in an inscription found at Baalbek. Criticism on this identification has been uttered by Myers (2010) 165-166.

besides a representation of the new ruler also a portrait of Octavian.²⁸ Of this Zenodorus, Josephus tells us the following in the context of a territorial grant that Augustus made to Herod in the mid-20s BC:²⁹

“There was a certain Zenodorus who had leased the domain of Lysanias, but not being satisfied with the revenues, he increased his income by using robber bands in Trachonitis. For the inhabitants of that region led desperate lives and pillaged the property of the Damascenes, and Zenodorus did not stop them but himself shared in their gains. The neighbouring peoples, feeling these serious losses, protested to Varro, who was then their governor, and asked him to write to Caesar [i.e. Augustus, ed.] about the misdeeds of Zenodorus. When these reports were brought to Caesar, he wrote back that he should drive out the robber bands and assign that territory to Herod in order that through his supervision Trachonitis might cease to be an annoyance to its neighbours”.

The domain leased by Zenodorus clearly corresponds to the Princedom of Chalcis which had come under the rule of Lysanias in the 30s BC. From whom Zenodorus had leased the territories in question is not said explicitly by Josephus. Sullivan has argued on the basis of this passage and its earlier parallel in *Jewish War* that Zenodorus had rented his principality from the Egyptian queen Cleopatra, in the same way as Herod would have leased back the balsam groves around Jericho from her.³⁰ The relevant texts in Josephus’ *Jewish War* and *Jewish Antiquities*,

²⁸ Seyrig (1950) 46-48; Kindler (1993) 285, 287 no.14. Octavian’s portrait appears on the other two coin types as well (nos. 15-16).

²⁹ Josephus, *AJ* 15.344-345: “Ζηνόδωρος τις ἐμεμίσθωτο τὸν οἶκον τοῦ Λυσανίου. τούτῳ τὰ μὲν κατὰ τὰς προσόδους οὐκ ἤρκει, τὰ ληστήρια δὲ ἔχων ἐν τῷ Τράχωνι πλείω τὴν πρόσοδον ἔφερεν· οἰκοῦσι γὰρ ἄνδρες ἐξ ἀπονοίας ζῶντες τοὺς τόπους, οἱ τὰ Δαμασκηνῶν ἐλήζοντο, καὶ Ζηνόδωρος οὐτ’ εἶργεν αὐτός τε τῶν ὠφελειῶν ἐκοινῶνει. κακῶς δὲ πάσχοντες οἱ πλησιόχωροι Οὐάρρωνος κατεβόων τοῦ τότε ἡγεμονεύοντος, καὶ γράφειν ἤξιουν Καίσαρι τοῦ Ζηνοδώρου τὴν ἀδικίαν. Καῖσαρ δὲ ἀνενεχθέντων τούτων ἀντέγραφεν ἐξελεῖν τὰ ληστήρια τὴν τε χώραν Ἡρώδη προσνέμειν, ὥς διὰ τῆς ἐπιμελείας τῆς ἐκείνου μηκέτ’ ὀχληρῶν τῶν περὶ τὸν Τράχωνα γενησομένων τοῖς πλησίον”. A similar text is given by *BJ* 1.398. On the looting sponsored by Zenodorus and on the transferral of Zenodorus’ realm to Herod’s kingdom, see Aliquot (1999-2003) 232-233. On the location of Trachonitis, see map 4.

³⁰ Sullivan (1990) 207-208 and n.52. Earlier argues by Schmitt (1982) 112 without argumentation. On Herod’s lease of balsam groves, see chapter 9.3.

however, do not support such an interpretation. It is much more likely that the new prince, who according to his own coinage also carried the titles of τετράρχης and ἀρχιερεὺς, had leased his new principality from Octavian, who, as we saw, features on Zenodorus' coinage. What is more, Josephus clarifies in the passage quoted above that it was the pillaging activities which Zenodorus organised to make up for the lack of profits generated by his lease that had prompted the affected peoples to lodge a complaint with the governor Varro,³¹ who himself referred the issue to Augustus. Accordingly, Josephus seems to make clear that Zenodorus was leasing domains formerly belonging to Lysanias during Augustus' reign. After the defeat of Antony and Cleopatra at Actium, Octavian was given the task to decide on the future of the territories in the Levant and Asia Minor that had been granted to the Ptolemaic queen in 37/36, and it is not unthinkable that at that point he singled out Zenodorus as ruler and gave him the Princedom of Chalcis under lease. Although it cannot be excluded that this prince had played some role in the administration of this principality when it came under Ptolemaic rule, it is much more likely that Lysanias' former realm was directly run by the Egyptian queen until 31 and her subordinates.

Conclusion

The political interaction between Rome and the Princedom of Chalcis is not well documented in our extant source material and, partly for this reason and partly due to its small geographical extent not many forms of interaction are known. In the conflict between the Pompeian Caecilius and the Caesarian generals, the Princedom of Chalcis chose the side of Caecilius, possibly under Parthian pressure. Several years later, Lysanias saw his position confirmed by Antony, despite his possible allegiance to Parthia during the invasion between 40 and 38.

³¹ Varro's exact identity and term of office remain unknown, on which see Schürer (1973) 256.

Eventually accusations of alleged assistance rendered to the Parthians may have proven fatal to him. Being interlocked between Rome and Parthia in the period between 44 and 31 BC, the Princedom of Chalcis seems to have chosen the wrong party to support.

12 THE EMISENOI

The ways in which the political relationship between Rome and the Emisenoi developed in the period from 44 until 42 is largely shrouded in mist. The only possible political contact in these years attested in our extant sources is the military aid which Sampsigeramus and his son Iamblichus, φύλαρχοι of the Emisenoi, would have offered to Caecilius Bassus, one of Pompey's former equestrian officers at some point between 46 and 43. The possibility of Parthian influence having reached the Emisenian domains, as well as Parthia's active support for Caecilius, make the suggestion plausible that the Emisenian rulers were pressurised by the Parthians to ally themselves to Caecilius in his war against the Caesareans in Syria. Yet, whatever the exact driving force was behind the assistance which Sampsigeramus and Iamblichus would have granted to Caecilius, the influence that Parthia exerted over large areas of the Near East in the 40s BC eventually culminated in the grand-scale invasion of the year 40.¹ Although the exact role of the Emisenoi in this conflict is obscure, their attitude "could hardly have been openly pro-Roman" with the Parthian-backed Antigonus established as king in Judaea.² Following the final defeat inflicted upon the Parthians, Antony's generals began to reassert Roman authority in Asia Minor and the Near East. How the relationship between Rome and the Emesenoi developed from the end of the Parthian invasion until the defeat of Antony at Actium, is an issue that will be examined shortly.

¹ On the Parthian invasion, see chapter 8.1.

² Sullivan (1990) 201 (quotation). See also Sullivan (1977a) 209 for a similar view.

12.1 Arethusa and Antony

The death of the Parthian prince Pacorus on the battlefield in the year 38 is momentous for having marked the end of a two-year invasion during which the Parthians made their furthest advancement ever westwards into Asia Minor. Rome's triumph did not denote a return to the status quo for Parthia. Pacorus' downfall and the expulsion of the Parthian armies from Syria launched a period of political instability within Parthia, and the beginning of a purge among Parthia's ruling elite.³ Soon after the Roman general P. Ventidius Bassus had struck the final blow upon his opponents, the aged Parthian king Orodes installed his son Phraates as successor to the throne – a choice which turned out to be disastrous for members of the royal family and the aristocracy.⁴ Not only is the new monarch said to have eliminated all of his brothers and numerous persons from Parthia's upper echelons, but according to Justin and Plutarch, Phraates IV also would have been responsible for the death of his father.⁵ Nevertheless, several members of the ruling elite managed to escape the horrors of the royal court and fled to other places. A certain Monaeses, belonging to Parthia's nobility, took refuge with Antony in the year 37, and was allegedly presented by him with the cities of Larissa, Arethusa and Hierapolis.⁶ Despite a lack of clarity in the extant source material concerning the exact constitutional relation of these three places with Rome in the year following the ejection of the Parthian armies from Syria, we seem at least to be able to gather that Arethusa did not come under Roman provincial government. We have already seen that Strabo reckons this city to have belonged

³ See chapter 8.2.

⁴ Justin, *Epit.* 42.4.10-42.5.2; Dio, 49.23.3-5. On the death of Pacorus, Phraates' accession to the throne and the consequences of the succession for members of the royal family and for Parthia's aristocracy, see: Debevoise (1938) 120-123; Wolski (1993) 140-142.

⁵ Justin, *Epit.* 42.5.1; Plutarch, *Ant.* 37.1.

⁶ Plutarch, *Ant.* 37.1, 46.2; Dio, 49.23.5; cf. 49.24.2 only asserts that three Roman cities were presented to Monaeses. Although Dio does not specify the names of these cities, it is not very likely to assume that he refers to other places than Larissa, Arethusa and Hierapolis.

to Sampsigeramus and Iamblichus, φύλαρχοι of the Emisenoi.⁷ Although Strabo makes his claim in the context of the alliance which these two rulers would have had with the Pompeian equestrian officer Q. Caecilius Bassus at some point between 46 and 43, there is no reason to assume that in the year 37, Arethusa could not have fallen under the authority of the Emisenian rulers. In that case, the annexation of this city and the donation of it to a Parthian nobleman would demonstrate the extent to which the Emisenoi – albeit not officially under Roman provincial rule – were regarded as a part of Rome’s empire.

Dio seems to imply that the donation of the three cities was made, along with other presents, as reward for Monaeses’ promise to Antony “to lead his army and bring most of Parthia over to him without trouble”.⁸ Plausible as this explanation appears to be, the selection of Arethusa as present for Monaeses may have been initiated by Antony as a means to penalise the Emisenian rulers – or ruler if Sampsigeramus had already died – for their attitude during the Parthian invasion.⁹ Although the exact position of the Emisenoi in the conflict between Rome and Parthia remains opaque, we have already established that it is highly unlikely for Iamblichus and possibly also Sampsigeramus to have taken on openly an anti-Parthian attitude.¹⁰

Whatever the exact motivations were behind the alleged grant of three cities to Monaeses, these three places would not have been in Monaeses’

⁷ Strabo, 16.2.10.

⁸ Dio, 49.24.2: “τῆς... στρατείας ἡγήσεσθαι καὶ τὰ πλεῖω τῆς Παρθίας ἀκονιτὶ προσποιήσῃν ...”. Cf. Plutarch, *Ant.* 37.1, who connects the grant of the three cities with the ways in which for Antony Monaeses’ fortunes as a fugitive would be comparable with those of the Athenian statesman Themistocles in the fifth century BC. Pelling (1988) 222 argues convincingly that “Plutarch effectively applies this favourite story to his characterisation of Antony as boastful and open-handed, but there may be some fiction here...”. It is unlikely that the similarities between the experiences of these two fugitives would have prompted Antony to give three cities to Monaeses. The motivation brought forward by Dio is much more convincing. Cf. Reinhold (1988) 59-60, who claims that the three cities which Antony would have granted to Monaeses “had been the realm of Alchaudonius”. As is clarified below, the city of Arethusa would in 37 most likely have belonged to the Emisenian ruler(s).

⁹ So also Sullivan (1977a) 209.

¹⁰ Sullivan (1990) 201 proposes that “the appearance of Antony in the East may have caught Iamblichus in a posture of less than complete loyalty to Rome”.

possession for a long time. Both Dio and Plutarch inform us that the Parthian king Phraates managed to persuade Monaeses to return.¹¹ Whether as a result of this move, Arethusa was restored to the Emisenoi, remains unclear. Equally opaque is the issue whether the Emesenoi supported Antony in his Parthian campaign. The possibility can at any rate not be excluded.

12.2 Actium and the death of Iamblichus

The relations between Octavian and Antony deteriorated rapidly in the course of the year 32, and both commanders began to mobilise forces, gather provisions and exact funds in the lead up towards the military confrontation which eventually took place at Actium a year later. The army that Antony managed to assemble consisted both of Roman legions and of auxiliary troops recruited from kingdoms and principalities in Asia Minor and the Near East. The loyalty of these forces towards Antony did not, however, prove to be entirely flawless. Dio informs us, for example, of Philadelphus, king of Paphlagonia, and the Roman commander Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus, who already during the preparatory stage of the battle abandoned Antony's cause and changed their allegiance to Octavian.¹² The loss of these allies would have made Antony suspicious of everybody. For this reason, he "tortured and put to death, among others, Iamblichus, king of the tribe of the Arabians...".¹³ It is not entirely certain that this Iamblichus can be identified with the φύλαρχος of the Emesenoi mentioned by Strabo in relation to the support which this ruler and his father Sampsigeramus granted to Caecilius Bassus. The possibility can at any rate not be ruled out, all the more since the ethnic Arab/Arabian has been used by the ancient authors to denote a variety of

¹¹ Dio, 49.24.3; Plutarch, *Ant.* 37.2.

¹² Dio, 50.13.5-6.

¹³ Dio, 50.13.7: "ἀπέκτεινεν ἐκ τούτου ἄλλους τε καὶ Ἰάμβλιχον Ἀραβίων τινῶν βασιλέα βασανίσας...".

ethnic, social and political groups all over the Near East.¹⁴ For the motivation behind Iamblichus' alleged execution, our preserved sources do not provide us with any indication. Perhaps, Iamblichus' loyalty towards Antony had faltered in recent years. It is evident, at least, that the executed ruler was succeeded by Alexander, allegedly a brother of Iamblichus. Following Actium this ruler was captured by Octavian, staged in his triumph and put to death.¹⁵

Conclusion

Our knowledge of the political relationship between Rome and the Emisenoi in the period from the demise of Brutus and Cassius in 42 until the Battle of Actium in 31 is severely limited. In the year 37, the Emisenoi seem to have lost control over Arethusa. Antony would have annexed this city and given it to the Parthian nobleman Monaeses. Although this arrangement would not have been long-lasting, the possible annexation of a place that did not officially come under Rome's provincial authority, would demonstrate to what extent the dominions belonging to the Emisenoi formed a part of Rome's empire. Whether the annexation of Arethusa ought to be regarded as penalty for some unknown misconduct of the Emisenian leader(s) towards Antony, is unclear. Equally opaque remains the matter of whether the Iamblichus, whom Antony is said to have executed in the lead up to the Battle of Actium, can be identified with Iamblichus, φύλαρχος of the Emisenoi. If such an identification is possible, then the question arises how the relationship between Iamblichus and Antony could have deteriorated. Unfortunately, none of our extant sources can shed light on this issue.

¹⁴ On the use of the ethnic Arab/Arabian in the ancient sources to denote various social, political and ethnic groups, see among others Retsö (2003) 364-392 and Macdonald (2009) 280-285.

¹⁵ Dio, 51.2.2.

13 NABATAEA

Pompey's administrative reorganisation of the Near East in the second half of the 60s BC touched upon the internal government, territorial extent and financial autonomy of most kingdoms and principalities in that region. Armenia, Judaea and the Princedom of Chalcis were, for example, all subject to measures taken by Pompey within the framework of this restructuring programme.¹ The Nabataean kingdom seems to have been unaffected by these reforms. An inspection of it in the year 63 was prematurely aborted when a sudden deterioration in the succession crisis between the two Hasmonaean brothers, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, prompted Pompey to make his return to Judaea.² The alleged termination of this undertaking meant that, for the time being, the Nabataean king Aretas III was spared Roman interference into the domestic affairs of his kingdom. Future intrusion could not, however, be averted, and already in the following year, Pompey's successor as governor in Syria, M. Aemilius Scaurus, allegedly serving *proquaestore propraetore*, embarked on a military campaign against Nabataea, laying waste to the areas surrounding Petra.³ In spite of a claim made by Scaurus on a *denarius* that he issued in 58 as *aedile* along with his colleague P. Plautius Hypsaeus, the expedition does not seem to have ended in a Roman victory and the submission of Aretas. On the contrary, with the Nabataean capital still standing up to the Romans, Scaurus turned to diplomacy and successfully persuaded the king to pay a sum of money in exchange for the cessation of hostilities.⁴ Scaurus was apparently more interested in Aretas' wealth than in a

¹ See chapters 1.1, 1.6, 1.7.

² See chapter 1.7.

³ For Scaurus' official position, see the conclusion of chapter 1.

⁴ Josephus, *AJ* 14.80. The *denarius* issued by Scaurus and Plautius Hypsaeus depicts on the obverse a kneeling king Aretas holding a branch in his hand next to a dromedary (Crawford (1974) 446-447

protraction of the war with the possibility of exhausting his troops and resources – an observation that has led to the suggestion that the purpose of this whole campaign was nothing more than the extortion of financial means and supplies from the rich city of Petra.⁵ Yet, whatever Scaurus' exact motivations were for launching an attack on Nabataea, neither his expedition nor a campaign initiated by the proconsul of Syria, A. Gabinius, in the year 55 proved to be permanently ruinous for the political relations between Rome and the Nabataean kingdom.⁶ In the year 47, Herod's father Antipater, who was married to a Nabataean princess named Cypros, managed to tempt the Nabataean king Malichus I to send military assistance to Caesar for the war in Egypt.⁷ Whether Malichus eventually received any remuneration for his help similar to the honours bestowed upon Antipater and Hyrcanus is unknown.⁸ Our extant source material does not document any political conduct undertaken by Rome and Nabataea towards one another from the year 47 until the beginning of the 30s BC. For this reason, it remains also

no. 422). The scene clearly features an act of submission made by the Nabataean king. As argued by Bowersock (1983) 34-35 and Funke (1989) 9 n.37, Scaurus tried to disseminate the message that the Nabataean king had offered his surrender to him at the end of the expedition in the year 62. The representation of this campaign as a triumph over Aretas does not, however, correspond with the accounts by Josephus which clearly illustrate that the hostilities came to an end by diplomatic means. Cf. Hackl / Jenni / Schneider (2003) 111-114, who believe that the scene on the coin does not signify an act of submission, but an offer of peace by Aretas to Scaurus.

⁵ Josephus, *AJ* 14.80-81 and *BJ* 1.159 comprise the source material for the campaign undertaken by M. Aemilius Scaurus. Sartre (1979) 44-45 argues that Scaurus' cupidity could have been one of the driving forces behind the expedition. The author bases his view on some of the activities undertaken by Scaurus earlier and later during his career which would illustrate that avarice was not foreign to him. Bowersock (1983) 33 similarly claims that "although Pompey's planned inspection of Nabataea was probably part of some larger scheme for administering the Near East after the annexation of Syria, there is every reason to suspect that Scaurus moved into the kingdom of the Nabataeans principally to avail himself of the wealth of its rulers...". Sullivan (1990) 210 equally argues that financial motives played a role in the decision to attack Nabataea.

⁶ Josephus, *AJ* 14.103 and *BJ* 1.178 inform us of the expedition that Gabinius undertook against the Nabataeans. The Roman proconsul was victorious. For possible explanations of this campaign, see among others Sartre (1979) 46; Bowersock (1983) 35-36; Sullivan (1990) 210; Hackl / Jenni / Schneider (2003) 484-485. For the evidence of Gabinius' *provincia* and *imperium*, see Broughton (1952) 203.

⁷ Josephus, *AJ* 14.128; *BJ* 1.187. The anonymous *B.Alex.* 1.1 clarifies that the aid consisted of cavalry. Cf. Bowersock (1983) 38, who claims in error that the Nabataeans supported Caesar against Pompey. The horsemen had been sent to Egypt to assist Caesar in the war against Ptolemy XIII, brother of Cleopatra VII.

⁸ Josephus, *AJ* 14.137; *BJ* 1.194.

obscure whether any diplomatic and political exchanges occurred between Cassius and Malichus in the two years during which the Republicans ruled the Near East. The earliest attested political contact between Rome and Nabataea after the support given to Caesar occurred in the year 39 during the Parthian invasion of the Near East and Asia Minor. How the political relationship between these two powers developed thenceforth until the defeat of Antony and Cleopatra at Actium needs to be examined in this chapter.

13.1 Ventidius Bassus and Nabataea

At some point towards the end of 41 or the beginning of 40, Parthian forces crossed the River Euphrates and overran the province of Syria. The units led by the king's son Pacorus proceeded subsequently southwards along the Phoenician coast and through the interior lands to Judaea, while the Roman deserter in Parthian service, Q. Labienus, won over to his side a part of the Roman troops present in the East, and advanced along the south littoral of Anatolia possibly as far as Lydia and Ionia. The strength and reliability of the troops loyal to Rome or its representative in the region had proved to be insufficient to obviate the furthest Parthian penetration westwards. In order to restore Roman rule in the eastern Mediterranean, Antony assigned the war against the Parthians to his legate P. Ventidius Bassus. This Roman general managed to turn the tide and repel the invading armies from Asia Minor and Syria in the course of the year 39.⁹ Important as the successes in the war against the Parthians were for Rome, Ventidius' attention was not exclusively focused on the expulsion of the invaders. Demands for financial resources seem to have been made to several kings and princes in the East, and the Nabataean king Malichus is reckoned as one of them

⁹ See chapter 8.1.

by Dio.¹⁰ As explanation for the exaction of money by Ventidius, Dio refers to the assistance that Malichus granted to Pacorus.¹¹ Unfortunately, the author himself does not illuminate in what way the alliance with Pacorus manifested itself. Further details about the king's alleged collaboration with the Parthians are only provided by Josephus in his account of Herod's attempt to take refuge with the Nabataean king in the year 40 after the Parthian invasion of Judaea.¹²

As part of this episode described by Josephus, Herod is said to have proceeded to Nabataea following his escape from Jerusalem, in the hope of receiving money from Malichus which he was to use as ransom to set his brother Phasael free from imprisonment. An encounter between Herod and Malichus seems, however, not to have taken place on this occasion. On the contrary, Josephus relates that Herod received a message from Malichus with orders to retire, "for the Parthians had given him instructions not to receive Herod".¹³ That it would have been in Parthia's interest to obstruct all possible channels through which Herod could have received help is understandable if one bears in mind Herod's armed resistance against Antigonus, the Parthian-backed candidate for the Judaeian throne, earlier in the same year.¹⁴ Yet, the Parthians would only have been able to prevent Herod from obtaining assistance if they managed to secure the cooperation of the rulers and civic authorities in the region. Fortunately for the Parthians, many cities and kings in Asia Minor and the Near East did forge an

¹⁰ Dio, 48.41.5: "Besides accomplishing all this he exacted large sums of money from the rest individually, and large sums also from Antigonus and Antiochus and Malichus the Nabataean, because they had given help to Pacorus" ("Καὶ ὁ μὲν ταῦτά τε διῆγε, καὶ χρήματα πολλὰ μὲν παρὰ τῶν ἄλλων ὡς ἐκάστων, πολλὰ δὲ καὶ παρὰ τοῦ Ἀντιγόνου τοῦ Μάλχου τοῦ Ναβαταίου, ὅτι τῷ Πακόρῳ συνήραντο, ἐσέπραξε").

¹¹ It has generally been accepted that Ventidius' demand for financial resources was a retaliation measure for Malichus' alleged allegiance to the Parthians: Riddle (1961) 57; Starcky (1966) 910; Lindner (1970) 95; Schürer (1973) 580; Sartre (1979) 47-48; Bowersock (1983) 39-40; Sullivan (1990) 212.

¹² On Herod's flight from Judaea to Egypt, see chapter 10.4.

¹³ Josephus, *AJ* 14.372: "παρηγγελέσθαι γὰρ αὐτῷ Πάρθους Ἡρώδην μὴ δέχεσθαι..." (LCL transl. adapted).

¹⁴ On the clash between Herod's and Antigonus' forces, see: Josephus, *AJ* 14.334-339; *BJ* 1.250-253. For more details, see chapter 10.4.

alliance with them. King Malichus also appears to have chosen this cause, despite the good relations that he had maintained with Herod's late father Antipater. As Sartre has pointed out suitably, "lorsque toute l'Asie abandonne le parti de Rome, on voit mal comment Malichos aurait pu rester seul, isolé, au risque d'en subir les fâcheuses conséquences".¹⁵ The threat of a Parthian punitive expedition in the case of collaboration with Herod, an enemy of Parthia, prevailed apparently for Malichus above good relations with Herod's family.

Plausible as it thus is for Malichus to have collaborated with the Parthians, Josephus himself dismisses the Parthian prohibition of receiving Herod as a mere pretext, believing that the actual reason for Herod's expulsion from Nabataea was Malichus' unwillingness to repay his outstanding debts to Herod's late father Antipater.¹⁶ Sullivan casts doubt on the accuracy of this explanation by pointing to the affluence of the Nabataean kingdom as a result of its involvement in long-distance trade.¹⁷ Yet, to reject Josephus' version entirely, as Sullivan does, would go too far, all the more since the precise size and nature of Malichus' debt to Antipater remains unknown. Both Parthian pressure as well as a reluctance to reimburse Herod may accordingly have played a role in Malichus' decision to ban Herod from his kingdom.

Yet, whatever the exact motives were prompting Malichus not to receive Herod, the extant sources provide us at least with some indication of Malichus' allegiance to the Parthians. The exaction of money in the year 39 by Ventidius can thus indeed have served as a punitive measure to show Malichus that collaboration with an enemy of Rome was not tolerated. Financial motives, however, are not to be ruled out either. Sartre and Bowersock have already

¹⁵ Sartre (1979) 48.

¹⁶ Josephus, *AJ* 14.372; *BJ* 1.276. Cf. Bowersock (1983) 39, who asserts that Herod did not only demand protection from Malichus, but also "the restoration of the territories that had been conceded to the Arabs by Antipater". Yet, this latter statement is completely unfounded: in the whole episode of Herod's attempt to take refuge with the Nabataean king, no demand seems to have been made for the return of territories. Herod's requests seem to have been of a financial nature.

¹⁷ Sullivan (1990) 212.

touched upon the fact that the war against the Parthians had left the Roman treasury depleted and that the resources extracted from Nabataea would have come at a convenient moment.¹⁸

13.2 *The grant of territory to Cleopatra*

Following the conclusion of the Treaty of Tarentum in the summer or autumn of 37, Octavian remained in the western Mediterranean and began preparations for a new campaign against Sextus Pompeius, while Antony travelled via Asia Minor to Syria and implemented a far-reaching territorial reorganisation of the Near East and southern Anatolia during the winter of 37/36.¹⁹ Antony had decided to confer upon Cleopatra large tracts of land that until that point came under the rule of various cities, kings and dynasts.²⁰ Unlike some of those rulers, such as Lysanias, the prince of Chalcis, who was deposed and saw his domains entirely transferred to Ptolemaic rule, the Nabataean ruler Malichus was fortunate to retain his position of power and to experience just like Herod a mere partial territorial loss. Plutarch informs us that Malichus saw “that part of Arabia Nabataea which slopes toward the outer sea” removed from his realm and assigned to Cleopatra.²¹ Where this region was exactly located can unfortunately not be determined with certainty. In our section on the territorial grants to Cleopatra, I have argued, though, in line with Bowersock that the Nabataean domains given to the Ptolemaic queen probably consisted of the regions around the Gulf of Aqaba and in the northern Ḥejāz.²²

¹⁸ Sartre (1979) 48; Bowersock (1983) 39-40.

¹⁹ On the agreement reached at Tarentum between Octavian and Antony, see Bleicken (1990) 14-15 and *ibid.* n.28 with references; Pelling (1996) 25-27, q.v. 25 and *ibid.* n.112 believes that a compact at Tarentum may have been reached late July or August 37. On Octavian's war against Sextus Pompey, see: Pelling (1996) 34-36.

²⁰ For the details of the territorial grant to Cleopatra, including the date of the gifts, see chapter 9.3.

²¹ Plutarch, *Ant.* 36.2: “...τῆς Ναβαταίων Αραβίας ὅση πρὸς τὴν ἐκτὸς ἀποκλίνει θάλασσαν”.

²² Chapter 9.3.

Economically vital as the regions probably assigned to Cleopatra thus were, the Ptolemaic queen does not seem to have ruled the newly received portions of the Nabataean kingdom herself. The account by Josephus explains that Herod leased the newly awarded district from her at some point before the Armenian campaign in 34, and even stood surety for the payment of tribute which Malichus allegedly owed her.²³ Bowersock claims that the arrangement was contrived by Cleopatra to generate discord between the Nabataean and Judaeen kings.²⁴ Although there is no proof to corroborate this view, a conflict did eventually arise before the Battle of Actium between the two rulers over outstanding payments to the Ptolemaic queen. On Cleopatra's instigation, Antony instructed Herod to launch an attack on Nabataea.²⁵ Josephus explains that Cleopatra hoped in this way to extend her hegemony over either Judaea or Arabia depending on the outcome of the war.²⁶ The hostilities ultimately ended in a victory for Herod after Actium. The kingdom of Malichus was by that time no longer under the threat of a Ptolemaic annexation.

13.3 Nabataean support at Actium

In the course of the year 32, relations between Antony and Octavian degenerated rapidly. Both commanders began to mobilise forces, gather provisions and exact funds in the prelude to a military confrontation that eventually took place at Actium a year later.²⁷ The armies that Antony had managed to muster did not, however, merely consist of Roman legions. Auxiliary troops sent by kings and

²³ Josephus, *AJ* 15.96, 107, 132; *BJ* 1.362. For more details on the lease and the tribute for which Herod served as guarantor, see chapter 10.7.

²⁴ Bowersock (1983) 41. Also implied by Lindner (1970) 97.

²⁵ For more details on the war between Herod and Malichus as well as on the role of Antony and Cleopatra in the conflict see chapter 10.7.

²⁶ Josephus, *AJ* 15.110; *BJ* 1.364-365. For more details on the role of Antony and Cleopatra in the war between Herod and Malichus,

²⁷ On the deterioration of the relations between Antony and Octavian, and the mobilisation of forces, see among others Syme (1939) 276-293; Lange (2009) 60-70.

dynasts from the eastern Mediterranean were present at Actium as well. Plutarch provides us with a list of rulers who had sent an army to Greece, and recounts a certain Malichus from Arabia (Μάλχος ἐξ Ἀραβίας) among them.²⁸ Most likely, this Malichus is to be identified with the Nabataean king. No other Near Eastern ruler is known to have carried the same name around this time. Besides, in the context of the territorial grants to Cleopatra, Plutarch refers to a certain “Arabia of the Nabataeans” – a phrase suggesting that according to the author the Nabataeans inhabited an area called Arabia.²⁹ The Malichus who is said to have supplied Antony with an army is thus in all likelihood the ruler from Nabataea. The presence of Nabataean soldiers at Actium is nonetheless difficult to believe. Malichus was at the time of the battle engaged in a war against Herod and would probably have needed all his resources to fight the Judaeans. Implausible as Nabataean participation at Actium thus may seem in the light of the war against Herod, Plutarch’s report cannot be dismissed as fiction because of its idiosyncrasy.³⁰ It is possible that Malichus did not know that Antony and Cleopatra were behind the order to initiate an attack upon his kingdom. Moreover, he may have felt obliged to come to Antony’s assistance in order to demonstrate his loyalty in the hope not to face a loss of territory again.

Conclusion

The relationship between Rome and the Nabataean kingdom in the period from the death of Caesar until the defeat of Actium went through several different stages. During the Parthian invasion of the Near East and Asia Minor in 40, king

²⁸ Plutarch, *Ant.* 61.2.

²⁹ Plutarch, *Ant.* 36.2: “τῆς Ναβαταίων Ἀραβίας”. On the use of the ethnic “Arabs” to denote Nabataeans, see among others Retsö (2003) 364-392 and Macdonald (2009) 280-285.

³⁰ Cf. Pelling (1988) 268, who does not explain how it would have been possible for Malichus to send an army when he was engaged in a war against Herod. Graf (1986) 272 ignores the possible presence of a Nabataean army at Actium entirely. Josephus, *AJ* 15.111-160 and *BJ* 1.366-385 comprise the source material for the war between Herod and Malichus.

Malichus seems to have been allied to the Parthians. The money that Ventidius would have exacted from the Nabataeans a year later was in all likelihood meant as a punitive measure. In 37/36, the Nabataeans lost part of their territory to Cleopatra and were also forced to pay her contributions. At Actium, Nabataean forces are said by Plutarch to have fought on Antony's side. How long Malichus would have remained loyal to Antony remains unfortunately opaque. In the aftermath of the confrontation at Actium, Malichus appears to have incinerated the ships with which Cleopatra had fled the battle scene and reached Egypt.³¹ Bowersock argues that by this act, the Nabataean king would have secured Octavian's good will.³² In that case, Malichus would not have had the opportunity to enjoy it for a long time. Later in the year 30, he seems to have been succeeded by a certain Obodas.³³

³¹ Plutarch, *Ant.* 69.3; Dio, 51.7.1.

³² Bowersock (1983) 43.

³³ On the succession of Malichus I and the Nabataean kings in general, see among others Wenning (1993).

14 ARMENIA

For Armenia, Pompey's administrative reorganisation of the Near East marked the end of an age of expansionism. All the territories upon which king Tigranes II had laid claim following his accession to the throne around the middle of the 90s BC had to be abandoned under pressure of Pompey in the year 66. With the payment of 6,000 talents, Tigranes merely succeeded in retaining control over the kingdom that he had inherited from his predecessor Artavasdes I.¹ Disadvantageous as Pompey's measures initially seem to have been, soon after these political rearrangements had been implemented, Tigranes was rewarded for his submission with being enrolled among the friends and allies of Rome.² Thenceforth, the relations between the two powers appear to have remained peaceful. The death of Tigranes and the accession of his son Artavasdes II to the throne in probably 56 or 55 do not seem to have changed this situation.³ What is more, at some point after the beginning of his reign, Artavasdes was recognised as a friend of the Romans,⁴ and when Crassus embarked on his Parthian campaign in 53, Artavasdes not only advised him to launch an attack on Parthia through Armenia, but also offered 16,000 horsemen and 30,000 infantry soldiers to the

¹ On Pompey's reorganisation of Armenia, see chapter 1.1.

² On the enrolment of Tigranes among the friend and allies of Rome, see chapter 1.1. On the potential political implications of the establishment of friendship and alliance by Rome with kings, princes and other rulers in the Near East, see chapter 1.4.

³ For the sources on the date of Artavasdes' accession to the throne, see Sullivan (1990) 285, 447 n.19. Cf. Baumgartner (1896) 1308 who believes that Artavasdes had been made a co-regent with his father after the Battle of Tigranocerta in 69. He bases his view on a passage in Memnon, *BNJ* 434, F2 38.5 which reveals that in the aftermath of this battle Tigranes conferred "the diadem and the insignia of office on his son" ("τὸ διάδημα καὶ τὰ παράσημα τῆς ἀρχῆς ἐπιθεὶς τῶν παιδῶν"). The text does not specify which son exactly was given the diadem. Memnon could accordingly have had one of Tigranes' other sons in mind instead of Artavasdes.

⁴ Strabo, 11.14.15 does not inform us of the date of Artavasdes' recognition as a friend of the Romans.

Romans.⁵ Although Crassus decided against advancing through Armenia, he still seems to have counted on the military supplies offered by Artavasdes earlier on when he moved through Mesopotamia to the heart of Parthia. Unfortunately for him, however, the invasion of Armenia by the Parthian king Orodes made it impossible for Artavasdes to supply Crassus with Armenian contingents.⁶ Despite these circumstances, the ultimate disaster that befell the Romans at Carrhae was still blamed on the Armenian king.⁷ Whether or not this accusation was legitimate, it is evident that the Romans became wary of Artavasdes. This mistrust found expression in some of the letters that Cicero had sent in 51 during his term as proconsul of Cilicia.⁸ The Parthians had already crossed the Euphrates and overrun parts of Syria.⁹ Cicero feared that the Armenians would ally with the Parthians and launch an attack on the Roman possessions in Anatolia through Cappadocia. An Armenian invasion did not take place in the end, however. Artavasdes held aloof. Whether this stance eventually brought about a normalisation of the bilateral relations between Rome and Armenia remains unfortunately opaque. The possibility cannot be excluded, all the more since Armenian troops are said to have served as Pompey's allies at Pharsalus in 48.¹⁰ How the relations between Rome and the Armenian kingdom developed during the following thirteen years are regrettably obscure. The earliest known contact between Rome and Armenia after Pharsalus can be dated to the period following the expulsion of the Parthian invaders from Syria in 38. How the political relations

⁵ Plutarch, *Crass.* 19.1-2. For a detailed overview with sources of Crassus' Parthian campaign, see among others Debevoise (1938) 78-95.

⁶ Plutarch, *Crass.* 21.5; cf. Dio, 40.16.2, who refers to Orodes' intention to launch an attack upon Armenia. For a critical assessment of Artavasdes' role in Crassus' Parthian campaign, see Sherwin-White (1984) 286-290; Prantl (2008) 93-97.

⁷ Plutarch, *Crass.* 22.3.

⁸ Cicero, *Fam.* 15.2.2 (addressed to the magistrates and Senate at Rome on 21/22 September 51); 15.3.1 (addressed to M. Cato on 3 September 51); 15.4.4 (addressed to Cato towards the end of 51 or the beginning of 50); *Att.* 5.20.2.

⁹ For more details on the Parthian incursions across the Euphrates into Syria, see Debevoise (1938) 96-104; Sherwin-White (1984) 292-297.

¹⁰ Appian, *BCiv.* 2.71.

maintained by Rome and Armenia developed from this time onwards until the Battle of Actium, and to what extent Armenia kept its political independence from Rome needs to be considered here.

14.1 Armenia, the Caucasus and Antony's Parthian campaign

The defeat of the Parthian forces in the battle near Gindarus at some point in the course of 38 marked the end of a two-year invasion during which Parthian troops overran Syria and made their furthest advancement ever westwards into Asia Minor. Memorable as this decisive victory of the Roman proconsul P. Ventidius Bassus over his Parthian opponents was, the expulsion of the invading armies did not usher in a period of peace for the Near East as a whole. In the aftermath of the Parthian invasion, Rome endeavoured to reassert its authority in the eastern Mediterranean, and as part of this aspiration, it seems to have undertaken punitive expeditions against those rulers who had either given support to the Parthians, or had taken up arms against Rome and her allies. Best known of these retaliatory campaigns is, without doubt, the attack that Ventidius launched upon king Antiochus of Commagene, allegedly because of the latter's refusal to hand over the Parthian refugees who had taken shelter with him after their defeat in the war against Rome.¹¹ Not necessarily less vindictive was Rome's triumph in 37 over the Parthian-backed pretender Antigonus for his armed resistance against Herod, the Roman candidate for the Judaeian throne.¹² Whether besides Antigonus and Antiochus, other rulers – such as king Artavasdes of Armenia – were confronted with a Roman military punitive expedition in the wake of the Parthian invasion remains unclear. The possibility can at any rate not be excluded, all the more since Plutarch refers to a victory won by a certain P. Canidius Crassus over the

¹¹ See chapter 16.2.

¹² See chapter 10.5.

Armenian people as well as over the kings of the Caucasian Iberians and Albanians.¹³ Canidius Crassus had been one of the two *consules suffecti* of 40 and was left behind in the Near East by Antony following the settlement of peace with Antiochus of Commagene towards the end of 38.¹⁴ Moreover, Strabo elucidates that some of the passes connecting Armenia with Albania and Iberia were used by Canidius. Although the conquest of the Armenians is not explicitly mentioned, Strabo does at any rate support the idea that Canidius Crassus had been in Armenia.¹⁵

Details concerning the date of the alleged expedition as well as the possible motives for the supposed attack on these three peoples are unfortunately not given by Plutarch. Nevertheless, it is possible to gain some insight into these matters on the basis of Dio's account of Canidius Crassus' military adventures:

“During the remainder of the winter, when Gellius and Nerva were now holding office, Publius Canidius Crassus made a campaign against the Iberians in Asia, conquered in battle their king Pharnabazus and brought them to make an alliance; with this king he invaded Albania, the adjoining country, and, after overcoming the inhabitants and their king Zober, conciliated them likewise”.¹⁶

On the grounds that L. Gellius Publicola and M. Cocceius Nerva held their consulships in 36, we can conclude that Dio dates the Caucasian campaign to the

¹³ Plutarch, *Ant.* 34.6. On Ἀλβανία and Ἰβηρία, see among others Andreas (1894); Tomaschek (1894) 1305-1306; Treidler (1962); Sullivan (1990) 291-293. Canidius Crassus' official position for this year is unknown.

¹⁴ Plutarch, *Ant.* 34.4, 34.6. On the chronology of the war against Antiochus of Commagene, see chapter 16.2. On the consulship of Canidius Crassus, see Broughton (1952) 378-379.

¹⁵ Strabo, *Geogr.* 11.3.5.

¹⁶ Dio, 49.24.1: “ἐν δὲ δὴ τῷ λοιπῷ χειμῶνι τοῦ τε Γελλίου καὶ τοῦ Νέρου ἀρχόντων, Πούπλιος Κανίδιος Κράσσος ἐπὶ Ἰβηρας τοὺς ταύτη στρατεύσας μάχῃ τε τὸν βασιλέα αὐτῶν Φαρνάβαζον ἐνίκησε καὶ ἐς συμμαχίαν προσηγάγετο, καὶ μετ' αὐτοῦ ἐς τὴν Ἀλβανίδα τὴν ὁμορον ἐμβαλὼν, καὶ ἐκείνους τὸν τε βασιλέα αὐτῶν Ζόβηρα κρατήσας, ὁμοίως αὐτοὺς ὤκειώσατο”.

beginning of that year before the onset of spring.¹⁷ Details concerning the time of the alleged victory over the Armenians have, however, not been disclosed by Dio; this episode has even not found its way into his *Roman History*. From the lack of any reference in this work to an expedition conducted against the Armenians in 36 we cannot, however, infer that the conquest of the Armenians had not taken place. On the contrary, additional evidence can be brought forward to support Plutarch's version of Canidius Crassus' expeditions. In the first place, Strabo reports that some of the passes connecting Armenia with Albania and Iberia were used by Canidius. Although the conquest of the Armenians is not explicitly mentioned, Strabo does at any rate support the idea that Canidius Crassus had been in Armenia.¹⁸ In the second place, situated along with several other kingdoms and principalities between Parthia in the southeast, and those Roman provinces in Anatolia which had been overrun by the Parthians in the year 40 in the west and southwest, it is highly unlikely that Armenia could have maintained a pro-Roman stance. With the Armenian king Artavasdes thus having kept up almost certainly a hostile attitude towards Rome, the use of armed power by Canidius Crassus against king Artavasdes of Armenia would be understandable. The same driving force may also have been behind the decision to undertake a military expedition against the kings of the Iberians and Albanians.

Yet, plausible as these explanations for the apparent Caucasian and Armenian campaigns are, other considerations did possibly play a role in the decision-making process preceding these expeditions as well. In the passage quoted above, Dio informs us of alliances which Canidius Crassus is said to have made with the Iberian and Albanian tribes following their defeat in war against Rome. Although Dio does not reveal the implications of these alliances, it is not

¹⁷ Treidler (1962) 1907; Pelling (1988) 212; Sullivan (1990) 292 all place the Caucasian campaign in 36. Cf. Sherwin-White (1984) 307, n.26 who purports that "a winter offensive... is improbable". An alternative date is, however, not provided. On the consulship of Gellius Publicola and Cocceius Nerva, see Broughton (1952) 399.

¹⁸ Strabo, 11.3.5.

inconceivable that with the formation of these compacts, Canidius Crassus had secured armed support from the Iberian and Albanian kings for Antony's military expedition against Parthia in the summer of 36.¹⁹ Plutarch explicitly reckons Iberians (possibly from the Caucasus) among the cavalry gathered by Antony for his campaign. Albanian contingents could potentially have been among the 30,000 soldiers who are mentioned by Plutarch without any ethnic specification.²⁰ Yet, in whatever way the Iberian and Albanian kings participated in the war against Parthia, if we have to believe Plutarch, then their contribution could not have been more substantial than the assistance granted by the Armenian king Artavasdes, who is said to have "furnished 6,000 horse and 7,000 foot", and was supposedly the greatest of all the allied kings.²¹ Details concerning the formation of an alliance with Artavasdes, eventually bringing about Armenian assistance for Antony's military adventure into Parthia, have unfortunately been documented neither by

¹⁹ Günther (1922) 51, n.1; Huzar (1978) 175 and Pelling (1988) 212 all argue that Canidius Crassus' achievements in the Caucasus were intended to diminish the chance of Antony suffering an attack from the north on his march to Parthia. Cf. Sherwin-White (1984) 308, who disagrees with this generally accepted explanation for Caucasian campaigns and points out that "the Iberians and Albanians, freed from the Armenian yoke by Pompeius, had no known interest in the lands south of the mountain barrier that separated them from Armenia, apart from the recovery of certain borderlands from the Armenians...". The same observation has been made by Freyburger / Roddaz (1994) cxxvi. Yet, from the absence of proof for Iberian and Albanian ambitions to expand the kingdom to the south, it is, however, not possible to draw the conclusion – as Sherwin-White does – that the Caucasian campaign conducted by Canidius Crassus "was no more than an operation of prestige...". Reinhold (1988) 59 does not exclude either of the two explanations for Canidius Crassus' military adventures in the Caucasus.

²⁰ Plutarch, *Ant.* 37.3: "There were, of the Romans themselves, 60,000 foot-soldiers, together with the cavalry classed as Roman, namely, 10,000 Iberians and Celts; of the other nations there were 30,000, counting alike horsemen and light-armed troops" ("ἦσαν δὲ Ῥωμαίων μὲν αὐτῶν ἑξακισμύριοι πεζοὶ καὶ τὸ Ῥωμαίοις συντεταγμένον ἵππικόν, Ἰβήρων καὶ Κελτῶν μύριοι, τῶν δὲ ἄλλων ἔθνῶν ἐγένοντο τρεῖς μυριάδες σὺν ἱππεύσιν ὁμοῦ καὶ ψιλοῖς"); Pelling (1988) 223 asserts correctly that the Ἰβήρες referred to by Plutarch could have been Spaniards, but also Caucasian Iberians.

²¹ Plutarch, *Ant.* 37.3: "... ἑξακισχιλίους ἵππεις καὶ πεζοὺς ἑπτακισχιλίους παρέχων". Cf. Strabo, 11.14.9, who also reports that Artavasdes provided Antony with 6000 horsemen. Cf. Plutarch, *Ant.* 50.2, who refers to the number of horsemen led by Artavasdes of Armenia as 16,000 not 6,000. It seems highly plausible that one of these numbers is erroneous. Pelling (1988) 223 argues, however, that "possibly both figures are correct. If the muster was in West Armenia, the greater part of the Armenian contingent may not have joined him until later, as he made his way towards Media". However plausible this interpretation is, the assumption that the muster of all the troops occurred in west Armenia is not in the least certain. See on Antony's route Sherwin-White (1984) 307-312.

Plutarch, nor by Dio. Nonetheless, it is plausible that it was the military invasion of Armenia by Canidius Crassus that procured an alliance between Rome and king Artavasdes, in the same way as compacts were formed with the Iberian and Albanian rulers following Canidius Crassus' attacks on their kingdoms.²²

Armenian involvement in the military expedition against Parthia did go beyond the provision of infantry and cavalry. Strabo asserts, for example, that Artavasdes served as a guide, "a counsellor and master of decisions respecting the war".²³ Specific manifestations of this role that Artavasdes would have played in Antony's campaign are, however, not unveiled by Strabo. Fortunately, Dio can provide us with a useful indication:

"And he [Antony, ed.] went as far as the Euphrates, thinking it was destitute of a garrison; when, however, he found that whole region carefully guarded, he turned aside from it, but undertook to make a campaign against Artavasdes, the king of the Medes, being persuaded thereto by the king of Greater Armenia, who had the same name and was an enemy of the other".²⁴

²² Cf. Prantl (2008) 100, who believes that Antony had assigned Canidius Crassus with the task to renew "die Klientelherrschaft über Armenien". Prantl's usage of the term "Klientelherrschaft" in this context is regrettable. Evidence for a renewal of client rule over Armenia is non-existent. Moreover, ancient sources do not describe the socio-political relations between Rome and kings or princes in terms of *clientela*, apart from a few instances (see Introduction section 5). It remains therefore opaque what Prantl means by a renewal of the "Klientelherrschaft". In my opinion, it is most likely that the aim of Canidius Crassus' campaign against Armenia was the renewal of an alliance with the Armenian king. The formation of this alliance may be the event that was commemorated on a *denarius* of Antony, which features on the reverse an Armenian tiara. For the date of this coin and the interpretation of the tiara, see Bedoukian (1978) 27-28; Crawford (1974) 537 no.539, 743. Cf. Sullivan (1990) 289, who argues that the tiara depicted on the reverse of this coin "copied the version of the king of Atropatene, Artavasdes I...". It remains debatable how much military force was actually used to bring about a compact between Armenia and Rome. Sherwin-White (1984) 307 argues that "king Artavasdes... doubtless submitted as quickly as his father had done to Pompeius". This view has been adopted by Pelling (1988) 213. According to Prantl (2008) 100, it remains unclear whether Roman troops had to use armed force. Nonetheless, Prantl proposes that actual armed hostilities had probably not taken place.

²³ Strabo, 11.13.4: "... σύμβουλον ἐποιεῖτο καὶ κύριον τῆς περὶ τοῦ πολέμου γνώμης"; 16.1.28.

²⁴ Dio, 49.25.1: "ἦλθε μέχρι τοῦ Εὐφράτου, νομίζων ἔρημον αὐτὸν φρουρᾶς εἶναι· ἐπεὶ μέντοι πάντα τὰ ταῦτα διὰ φυλακῆς ἀκριβοῦς ὄντα εὗρεν, ἐκεῖθεν μὲν ἀπετράπετο, ἐπὶ δὲ τὸν τῶν Μήδων βασιλέα Ἀρταουάσδην τῷ τῆς Ἀρμενίας τῆς μείζονος βασιλεῖ, ὁμωνύμῳ τέ οἱ καὶ ἐχθρῷ ὄντι, πεισθεὶς...".

Dio clearly states that the Armenian king persuaded Antony to undertake a campaign against Artavasdes of Media Atropatene when Antony found out that the Euphrates was guarded by Parthians. The Armenian ruler is said to have maintained hostile relations with the Atropatenean ruler. Artavasdes possibly nursed hopes that Antony would grant him a part of, or perhaps even the whole territory of Media Atropatene after a triumph. Media Atropatene had been part of the kingdom of Armenia for some years during the reign of Tigranes the Great. Artavasdes represented himself as King of Kings on his coinage, emulating his predecessor Tigranes the Great (r. c. 96/95-56/55 BC), who expanded his kingdom to include all adjacent kingdoms and principalities, Syria and portions of Parthia and Cilicia.²⁵

In the passage quoted above, Dio seems to imply that the decision to attack king Artavasdes of Media Atropatene was only made after Antony's discovery that the Euphrates was heavily guarded by Parthian troops, making a crossing (at Zeugma)²⁶ too hazardous. However, such an interpretation is rather implausible; Antony probably did not suddenly change his entire strategy. The attack on Media Atropatene had probably already been planned. Canidius Crassus and Artavasdes of Armenia may already have decided on the attack earlier during the year. The logical question then crops up why Antony would have marched to Zeugma, a place at which the Euphrates could be crossed and whence Roman troops could advance through Mesopotamia to the centre of the Parthian kingdom. It is most likely, as Sherwin-White has proposed, that Antony intended to cross the Euphrates at Zeugma and to push from there to Armenia and further across the Araxes River into Media Atropatene – possibly in order to avoid the Parthian cavalry in the Mesopotamian plains which had caused disaster to Crassus' campaign in 53. However, with the Euphrates safeguarded, Antony was forced to

²⁵ Bedoukian (1978) 69-70, nos. 130-135 refers to drachms and copper coins have been found that carry the legend "BACIAEQC BACIAEQN APTAYAZΔOY". See also the catalogue in Mousheghian / Depeyrot (1999) 166-167, nos. 113-118.

²⁶ Strabo, 11.13.5 refers to one of Antony's guides who travelled from Zeugma to Atropatene.

make an enormous detour through Commagene. From Armenia, Antony advanced to Phraaspa, the capital of Media Atropatene. The expedition against Media Atropatene did not lead to the results for which Antony had hoped. On the contrary, the siege engines that Antony had left behind under the command of Statianus while he advanced towards the city of Phraaspa were destroyed by the troops of the Parthian king Phraates IV. The Armenian king Artavasdes had by that time retreated from the expedition and returned to his homeland.²⁷ Although in the ancient literary sources Artavasdes received a negative judgement for his decision to retreat to his own kingdom, Prantl argues convincingly that Artavasdes probably retreated from the war because he did not wish to jeopardise the Parthians too much.²⁸ Artavasdes had experienced in 53 what the consequences could be of siding with Rome: while the Parthian commanders Suren and Silaces attacked the Roman legions, king Orodes himself occupied Armenia – in all likelihood to prevent the Armenian king from granting assistance to Crassus. Such an invasion Artavasdes did not wish to experience again in 36.

14.2 The Armenian campaigns of 34 and the late 30s BC

The withdrawal of king Artavasdes of Armenia in 36 from the battlefield in Media Atropatene proved to be catastrophic for the political relations between Antony and Artavasdes. Soon after the disaster had overcome the Romans, the triumvir is said to have entertained thoughts to take vengeance on the Armenian king.²⁹ In 35, preparations for an invasion with the objective to seize Artavasdes were already in an advanced phase, and an attack may possibly have taken place, had news of Octavia's forthcoming arrival in the eastern Mediterranean not prompted Antony

²⁷ Plutarch, *Ant.* 38.2-39.1; Dio, 49.25.2-5; Strabo, 11.13.4.

²⁸ Prantl (2008) 103.

²⁹ Dio, 49.31.2; Plutarch, *Ant.* 50.3.

to abort the mission.³⁰ In the following year, Antony renewed his attempts to capture the Armenian king. He did not, however, immediately set out on a military campaign. Dio informs us what strategies Antony employed instead to take revenge on Artavasdes:³¹

“In his endeavour to take vengeance on the Armenian king with the least trouble to himself, he [Antony, ed.] asked for the hand of the king’s daughter, as if to marry her to his son Alexander; he sent on this errand one Quintus Dellius, who had once been a favourite of his, and promised to give the king many gifts. Finally, at the beginning of spring, he came suddenly into Nicopolis (the place founded by Pompey), and while there sent for the king, stating that he wished to have his aid in planning and executing some measures against the Parthians. And when the king, suspecting the plot, did not come, he sent Dellius to confer with him again, and meanwhile, for his own part, marched with undiminished haste towards Artaxata”.

Dio claims that Antony initially tried to use the promise of a marriage of the king’s daughter with Alexander, the son whom he produced with Cleopatra, as a means to trap Artavasdes. Dynastic intermarriage was a widespread phenomenon in the Hellenistic world particularly designed to create alliances of a political nature between the kingdoms and principalities whose royal families were involved.³² Antony may have hoped that the offer of a marriage bond with the prestigious Ptolemies would entice Artavasdes to give his daughter to Alexander in wedlock. The new connection would give the triumvir ample opportunity to eliminate the Armenian king in whatever possible way. Evidence for an actual marriage

³⁰ Dio, 49.33. On Octavia’s visit to the East in 35, see among others Buchheim (1960) 84-88; Reinhold (1988) 65-66; Pelling (1988) 243-248.

³¹ Dio, 49.39.2-3: “πράττων δ’ ὅπως ὥς ὅτι ἀπονώτατα τὸν Ἀρμένιον τιμωρήσεται, τήν τε θυγατέρα αὐτοῦ ὥς καὶ τῷ υἱεῖ συνοικίσων ἤτησε, Κύνιτόν τινα Δέλλιον παιδικά ποτε ἑαυτοῦ ηγεόμενον πέμψας, καὶ πολλὰ τινα αὐτῷ δώσειν ὑπέσχετο. καὶ τέλος ἔς τε τὴν Νικόπολιν τὴν τοῦ Πομπηίου αἰφνίδιον ἄμα τῷ ἥρῳ ἦλθε, κἀνταῦθα αὐτὸν ὥς καὶ συμβουλευσόντα καὶ συμπράξοντά τινα κατὰ τῶν Πάρθων μετεπέμψατο. ἐπειδὴ τε οὐκ ἀφίκετο τὴν ἐπιβουλήν ὑποπτεύσας, τὸν τε Δέλλιον αὖθις ἔς λόγους οἱ προσέπεμψε, καὶ αὐτὸς οὐδὲν ἤττον σπουδῇ πρὸς τὰ Ἀρτάξατα ἤλασε” (LCL transl. adapted).

³² Seibert (1967); Sullivan (1990) 14-15.

between Alexander and a daughter of Artavasdes does, however, not appear to exist. The proposal was, thus, most likely rejected by Artavasdes. An alternative scheme to take the Armenian king into custody equally failed to procure the desired results. Antony decided accordingly to advance into Armenia. He moved towards the capital Artaxata, and managed by means of a ruse to put the king under arrest and carry him off to feature in a procession in Alexandria.³³ The victory over Armenia was subsequently commemorated on some of Antony's coinage.³⁴

Revenge for Artavasdes' behaviour during the Parthian campaign of 36 was in all likelihood one of the main driving forces behind Antony's decision to capture the Armenian king. Yet, despite the prominence of the theme of retaliation in some of the ancient texts,³⁵ other factors seem to have been in play as well. Antony did not limit his activities in Armenia to the capture of Artavasdes. Before the prisoner was carried off to Alexandria, the triumvir is said to have taken him to visit those fortresses in Armenia where his assets were stored.³⁶

Apparently, Antony was in need of financial resources, and his decision to arrest Artavasdes may have been dictated by the assumption that it would be easier to lay claim on Armenia's treasuries by using the release of the king as bait. Unfortunately for Antony, the scheme failed to achieve its objective. The Armenians abandoned Artavasdes and selected the eldest son Artaxias as king instead. Thereupon Antony resorted to his arms and occupied the whole kingdom, forcing Artaxias to seek refuge with the Parthians.³⁷ The occupation of Armenia

³³ Dio, 49.39.2-49.40.4; Plutarch, *Ant.* 50.4; Livy, *Per.* 131; Strabo, 11.14.15; Josephus, *AJ* 15.96, 104; Velleius, 2.82.3; Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.3; Orosius, 6.19.3. Cf. Josephus, *BJ* 1.362-363, who is clearly mistaken to believe that Antony made a campaign into Parthia at this stage and that the son of Tigranes, Artabazes, whom he took with him as prisoner, was a Parthian (Πάρθος).

³⁴ Grueber, *BMCRR* II, 525, nos. 179-182 with brief discussion; Crawford (1974) 539, no. 543: on the obverse of the *denarius* is the head of Antony and an Armenian tiara depicted, with the legend "ANTONI ARMENIA DEVICTA"; the reverse has a bust of Cleopatra, draped and wearing a diadem. We can see the legend "CLEOPATRAE REGINAE REGUM FILIORUM REGUM".

³⁵ Plutarch, *Ant.* 50.3; Dio, 49.31.2; 49.33.1; 49.39.2; Strabo, 11.13.4; 11.14.15.

³⁶ Dio, 49.39.5.

³⁷ Dio, 49.39.6-49.40.1; Josephus, *AJ* 15.105.

gave Antony finally the opportunity to get hold of the material wealth stored in the various forts throughout the kingdom. Financial motives may thus have been vital behind the decision to invade Armenia and put its king under arrest. This does not, however, exclude that other factors were in play as well. An additional motive for the removal of the Armenian king is possibly the secret negotiations which Artavasdes, according to Dio, maintained with Octavian “for the purpose of injuring Antony”.³⁸

Yet, whatever drove Antony to eliminate Artavasdes, it is at least clear that he did not allow the newly installed king Artaxias (r. 34-20), son of Artavasdes, to succeed to the Armenian throne. Antony gave in the year 33 a part of the newly acquired Armenian territory to Artavasdes of Media Atropatene, who was at variance with his Armenian opponent and whose daughter Iotape had been betrothed to Alexander, the son of Antony and Cleopatra.³⁹ However, as soon as Antony was forced to withdraw his forces on which Artavasdes of Media Atropatene depended later during the year as part of preparations for the impending armed clash against Octavian, Artaxias left Parthia (where he had taken refuge), successfully defeated the Atropatenean king and appropriated the kingdom that he had been given in 34 following the capture of his father.⁴⁰

Conclusion

In the years between the onset of Roman civil war following the assassination of Caesar and the Battle of Actium, the political relations between Rome and Armenia underwent significant changes. From an ally in the Parthian campaign, Armenia became an enemy of Rome after the Armenian king had withdrawn from the battlefield. Artavasdes’ disloyalty to Rome should, however, not be

³⁸ Dio, 49.41.5: “... ἐπὶ τῷ Ἀντωνίῳ κεκοινολογημένος...”. Confirmed by Buchheim (1960) 90.

³⁹ Dio, 49.44.2.

⁴⁰ Dio, 49.44.4.

understood as a expression of an *a priori* detestation of Rome, but rather as a reflection of Armenia's precarious position on the world stage between Rome and Parthia. In order to maintain some degree of independence, the Armenian king was forced not to ally himself completely to either of the two parties. On the other hand, Rome and Parthia had an interest in preventing each other from gaining too much political influence over Armenia, as this kingdom formed the link between both empires.

15 MEDIA ATROPATENE

The relations between Rome and Media Atropatene in the period of civil war from 44 until 42 remained largely unknown, as we saw in Part II.A. Median troops participated at Philippi, fighting on the side of Brutus and Cassius. With the loss of the tyrannicides and the arrival of Antony in the East, it would be vital to see how the relations developed in the period up till Actium. Unfortunately, as we shall realise, our sources do not reveal anything about the relations with Media Atropatene until Antony's Parthian campaign in 36. Whether the support for the the tyrannicides at Philippi had any negative consequences for Media Atropatene in the subsequent years can thus not be determined.

15.1 The Parthian and Armenian invasions

In the spring of the year 36, Antony launched his military expedition against Parthia. In order to avoid any encounter with the Parthian cavalry which had brought ruin upon the legions of Crassus in 53, Antony decided not to advance through the plains of Mesopotamia – the natural habitat of those horsemen. His march led him instead via the mountainous regions of Armenia across the Araxes River into Media Atropatene, which at that time was ruled by a certain Artavasdes, and thenceforth further to the city of Phraaspa.¹ Although the strategy initially seemed to be successful, the long-term siege of this place allowed the Parthian and Median forces, who had gathered on the Euphrates near Zeugma, to move to Media Atropatene and fight the Romans. Several armed confrontations ended in triumphs for the Parthians, and Antony was as a result of the losses

¹ On Antony's marching route and the location of Phraaspa, see chapter 8.2.

ultimately forced to make his retreat from the battlefield and to return into Armenia.²

The campaign resulted in the loss of about a third of Rome's forces, and left Antony's prestige damaged. To what extent Atropatenean forces had contributed to this military success over Rome is not entirely clear. It is at least evident that soon after the victory a rift occurred in the relations between the Parthian king Phraates and the Atropatenean Artavasdes, eventually leading to a rapprochement between the latter ruler and Antony:

"he [Antony, ed.] attempted to conduct a campaign against the Armenian. For this he placed no small hope in the Mede, who in his anger against Phraates because he had not received from him many of the spoils or any other honour and in his eagerness to punish the Armenian for bringing in the Romans had sent Polemon to him [Antony, ed.] requesting his friendship and alliance".³

Artavasdes' overtures found a sympathetic ear with Antony, and are said to have brought about the conclusion of a treaty (σπείσασθαι) between the two parties through the agency of the Pontic king Polemon.⁴ What the terms of this compact between the two parties were, is unfortunately not revealed to us. That the agreement arranged for Atropatenean support to Rome in the impending

² On the course and outcome of Antony's Parthian campaign, see chapter 8.2. See also maps 2 and 5.

³ Dio 49.33.1: "στρατεῦσαι ἐπὶ τὸν Ἀρμένιον ἐπεχείρησεν, ἐλπίδα τοῦ Μήδου οὐκ ἐλαχίστην ἔχων, ὅτι πρὸς τε τὸν Φραάτην ἀγανακτήσας ἐπὶ τῷ μήτε τῶν λαφύρων πολλὰ παρ' αὐτοῦ μήτ' ἄλλην τινὰ τιμὴν λαβεῖν, καὶ τὸν Ἀρμένιον τιμωρήσασθαι τῆς τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἐπαγωγῆς, τὸν Πολέμωνα αὐτῷ προσέπεμψε καὶ φιλίαν καὶ συμμαχίαν αἰτῶν" (LCL transl. adapted). It is clear that "the Mede" in this context refers to the Atropatenean and not to the Parthian king, since the latter is mentioned separately in the same passage and is singled out as the object of the Mede's anger. Cf. Plutarch *Ant.* 52.1-2, who equally refers to the dispute between the Parthian ruler Phraates and the king of "the Medes" (τῶν Μήδων) concerning the partition of the Roman spoils, but keeps silent about any conflict between Media Atropatene and Armenia.

⁴ Dio 49.33.1: "He [Antony, ed.] was apparently so exceedingly delighted over the affair that he both made a treaty with him [the Mede, ed.] and later gave Polemon Lesser Armenia as a reward for his mission" ("οὕτω γὰρ που ὑπερήσθη τῷ πράγματι ὥστε καὶ ἐκείνῳ σπείσασθαι καὶ τῷ Πολέμῳ μισθὸν τῆς κηρυκείας τὴν μικροτέραν Ἀρμενίαν μετὰ ταῦτα δοῦναι"). (LCL transl. adapted).

campaign against the Armenian king is at any rate very likely. It can, however, not be excluded that the two parties had also made plans for an attack on Parthia to be staged at some point after the expedition into Armenia. The Atropatenean Artavasdes was at odds with his Parthian counterpart Phraates over the division of the booty seized during the Roman invasion of 36, and would according to Plutarch have made promises to Antony to fight alongside him against the Parthians.⁵ Plutarch places these assurances to Antony and the preparations for a new Parthian campaign in the period before Octavia's visit to the East in 35.⁶ Although the expedition into Parthia appears not to have been scheduled for this year,⁷ it is very well possible that a military alliance for a future war against Parthia had already been made in 35 and formed a component of the treaty concluded at that time.⁸

Yet, whatever may have been agreed upon by Antony and Artavasdes of Media Atropatene, it is clear that Octavia's visit to the eastern Mediterranean prompted the triumvir to postpone his expedition against Armenia until the year 34. In what way the Atropatenean king participated in this campaign cannot be established with certainty. The enterprise was, at any rate, not detrimental to the good relations between the two men.⁹ On the contrary, after the capture of the

⁵ Plutarch, *Ant.* 52.1.

⁶ On Octavia's visit to the eastern Mediterranean, see among others Buchheim (1960) 84-88.

⁷ Dio, 49.33.3 makes clear that Antony had the intention to advance on Armenia, but pretended to undertake a campaign against Parthia "in order that he might find him [the Armenian king, ed.] unprepared" ("ἵνα ἀπαράσκευον αὐτὸν εὔρη"). Cf. Plutarch, *Ant.* 52 who genuinely seems to believe that Antony was about to set out on a campaign against Parthia in the year 35, only for it to be aborted after he had received news of Octavia's coming to the East. That an attack on Parthia was planned to be launched in 35 is, however, highly unlikely. After Antony had dismissed Octavia, he first dealt with Armenia, not with Parthia. Moreover, as Pelling (1998) 242-243 has argued, Plutarch may have used elements of the preparatory stages prior to the planned Parthian campaign of 33 for his description of the preliminaries that preceded the alleged intended expedition of 35. Plutarch says that "he [Antony, ed.] prepared to go up again through Armenia, effect a junction with the Mede at the river Araxes, and then prosecute the war" ("παρεσκευάζετο δι' Ἀρμενίας αὐτὸς ἀναβαίνειν καὶ συγγενόμενος τῷ Μήδῳ περὶ ποταμὸν Ἀράξην οὕτω κινεῖν τὸν πόλεμον"). A similar report can be found in Dio, 49.44.1, but then for the year 33.

⁸ Similar view uttered by Pelling (1988) 242-243.

⁹ For more details on the course of Antony's Armenian expedition see chapter 14.2.

Armenian Artavasdes and the invasion of Armenia,¹⁰ Antony is said to have renewed the friendly relations with Artavasdes of Media Atropatene by betrothing his son Alexander Helios, whom he procured with Cleopatra, to Iotape, the daughter of the Atropatenean ruler.¹¹ As explained in a previous chapter, the creation of this dynastic connection was politically motivated. Antony hoped that Media Atropatene as well as other portions of the eastern Mediterranean would eventually end up in Ptolemaic hands. Since the districts promised to Alexander Helios later in the year 34 at Alexandria were located east of the Euphrates and as such not under direct Roman control, Antony decided to arrange a marriage for his son with the daughter of the Atropatenean ruler in the hope that in this way Ptolemaic presence would be established in Media Atropatene and the other neighbouring kingdoms.¹²

Important as the arranged dynastic link between Alexander Helios and Iotape was to be able to fulfill Antony's grand-scale administrative reorganisation of the Near East, for the time being, the *status quo* remained unchanged: Artavasdes kept his position. In 33, Antony returned to Media Atropatene and engaged in diplomatic exchanges with the king. Dio reveals that

“they made a covenant to serve each other as allies, the one [Antony, ed.] against the Parthians and the other [Artavasdes, ed.] against Caesar, and to cement the compact they exchanged some soldiers, the Mede received a portion of the newly-acquired Armenia, and Antony received the king's daughter, to be united in marriage with Alexander, and the military standards taken in the battle with Statianus”.¹³

¹⁰ On the capture of Artavasdes and the invasion of Armenia, see chapter 14.2.

¹¹ Dio 49.40.2; Plutarch *Ant.* 53.6. The betrothal of Alexander Helios to Iotape occurred after the attempt to betroth his son to the daughter of the Armenian Artavasdes.

¹² On the territorial grants to Alexander Helios in 34, see chapter 9.4.

¹³ Dio 49.44.1-2: “συμμαχήσιν τε γὰρ ἀλλήλοις, ὁ μὲν ἐπὶ τοὺς Πάρθους ὁ δὲ ἐπὶ τὸν Καίσαρα, συνέθεντο, καὶ ἐπὶ τούτῳ στρατιώτας τέ τινας ἀντέδοσαν σφισι, καὶ ὁ μὲν τῆς Ἀρμενίας τῆς νεοκτήτου τινὰ ἔλαβεν, ὁ δὲ τὴν θυγατέρα αὐτοῦ Ἰωτάπην ὡς καὶ τῷ Ἀλεξάνδρῳ συνουκῆσουσαν, καὶ τὰ σημεῖα τὰ στρατιωτικὰ τὰ ἐν τῇ τοῦ Στατιανοῦ μάχῃ ἀλόντα”. Upon arrival in Media Atropatene, Oppius Statianus was left behind with the siege engines while Antony advanced ahead to Phraaspa with a portion of the troops. Statianus was subsequently defeated by the enemy, on which see Plutarch, *Ant.* 38.3.

Although a campaign into Parthia did in the end not take place, the alliance was still of use to both parties. Soon after the Atropatenean Artavasdes had been granted a part of Armenia – probably the region around Symbace – the Parthian king Phraates made an attack on him with the help of Artaxes, who had emerged as new king of Armenia after the arrest of his father and had been forced to seek refuge with the Parthians.¹⁴ The Atropatenean king did, however, manage to beat off the invaders with the assistance of the Roman allies. Only after Antony had withdrawn his Roman troops from this kingdom in the run-up to the war against Octavian did they manage to defeat Artavasdes. The Atropatenean possessions in Armenia were subsequently restored to Artaxes, and Media Atropatene remained under either Armenian or Parthian control until the year 20.¹⁵ Dio also says that the Atropatenean Artavasdes was taken captive. Although this statement cannot be excluded, it is at least evident that if he were captured, he was soon released, since he featured later on at Actium.¹⁶

15.2 Medes at Actium

For the war against Octavian, Antony had not merely Roman legions at his disposal, but could also count on the military support provided by various kings and princes in the eastern Mediterranean. Plutarch informs us of the rulers that had placed auxiliary troops at Antony's disposal, and reckons the king of the Medes (Μήδων) among them.¹⁷ Just as in an earlier passage of Antony's biography, Plutarch may also here be referring to the ruler of Media Atropatene.

¹⁴ Our only source for the grant of Symbace to Media Atropatene is Strabo, 11.13.2. For a debate on the exact location of Symbace, see Syme (1995) 81. For the capture of the Armenian Artavasdes, the emergence of Artaxes as king and his subsequent escape to Parthia, see chapter 14.2.

¹⁵ For more details on the annexation and occupation of Media Atropatene by Parthia or Armenia, see Sullivan (1990) 298-299.

¹⁶ Dio 49.44.4.

¹⁷ Plutarch, *Ant.* 61.2.

At first glance, the participation of auxiliary forces provided by the Atropatenean king appears to be odd, taking into account a passage in Dio's *Roman History* that refers to the capture of this ruler in 33.¹⁸ However, it is not impossible to presume that the Atropatenean Artavasdes was released and succeeded in returning to his kingdom.¹⁹ In that case, it would have been possible for the Atropatenean ruler to provide Antony with auxiliary forces for his war against Octavian. Clear explanations for the presence of Median forces at Actium are not provided by any of our sources. Nonetheless, it is not unthinkable that Antony lured the Atropatenean king with further grants of territories. Whatever the exact reason was for Artavasdes of Media Atropatene to dispatch troops to the assistance of Antony, after Actium he sought refuge with Octavian and may have been granted the rule over Armenia Minor instead of his own kingdom.²⁰

Conclusion

The political relations between Rome and Media Atropatene were diverse in the age of civil war. During the Parthian campaign of 36, the Atropateneans functioned as allies of the Parthian king Phraates, while in the period afterwards they showed their loyalty to Antony. The friendship and alliance with Antony appear to have been confirmed with the betrothal of Antony's son to a daughter of Artavasdes of Media Atropatene. Antony was apparently aware of the Hellenistic practice of intermarriage, which had proven to be an effective instrument to create and maintain alliances.

¹⁸ Dio, 49.44.4.

¹⁹ Cf. Wilcken (1896) 1310, who argues that Artavasdes of Media Atropatene was only captured by the Parthians in the year 30. Dio, however, places these events in the year 33.

²⁰ *RGDA* 32 says that Artavasdes, king of the Medes came as suppliant to him. Cooley (2009) 253 explains that Artavasdes of Media Atropatene had been an ally of Antony. After Actium, Artaxes II of Armenia began to resume control of greater Armenia and expelled Artavasdes who took refuge with Octavian; Dio 51.16.2. Cf. Sullivan (1990) 198-299.

16 COMMAGENE

The territorial rearrangement of Near Eastern kingdoms and principalities formed one of the most tangible facets of Pompey's administrative reorganisation of the Levant and Upper Euphrates basin in the 60s BC. Best documented of the geographical alterations implemented by Rome in this period are without doubt the enormous territorial deprivations that befell the Armenian king Tigranes and the Judaeian ἑθναρχης Hyrcanus. Yet, several other rulers also experienced an adjustment to the size of their realm. Changes were, for example, made in 64 to the extent of the dominions under the control of Antiochus I, king of Commagene.¹ This monarch had only been free from the Armenian yoke for approximately five years, and Pompey now allocated to him the town of Seleucia on the Euphrates (also known as Zeugma), and possibly parts of Mesopotamia as well. As Zeugma was located near an important crossing point of the Euphrates, marking the boundary of the spheres of influence between Rome and Parthia in eastern Anatolia, Pompey must have had confidence in Antiochus' loyalty to Rome. Pompey furthermore concluded friendship and possibly also an alliance with the Commagenian king, a benign relationship. That these good relations were not ephemeral became apparent during the consulship of Caesar in 59 when Antiochus was granted the honour of wearing the *toga praetexta*.² The upkeep of friendship with Rome did not, however, prevent Antiochus from maintaining good connections with Parthia. At some point in the second half of this decade or in the next one, the Commagenian king even established a dynastic link with the Arsacid rulers of Parthia by giving his daughter Laodice in marriage to the

¹ On Pompey's reorganisation of Armenia, Judaea and Commagene, see chapter 1.1, 1.7, 1.3.

² Cicero, *Q. fr.* 2.10(11).2. On the right bestowed upon Antiochus specifically and on kings in general to wear the *toga praetexta*, see Facella (2010) 194-195; Braund (1984) 27-29.

Parthian king Orodes II.³ Rome was probably not amused by this move, and may for this reason, on the urging of Cicero, have arranged for the removal of Zeugma or a district close to this city from Antiochus' possessions.⁴ Yet, whatever had prompted the annexation of territories, it is clear that the loss did not infuriate the Commagenian ruler to such an extent that he would neglect his friendship with Rome. In 51, for example, Antiochus was the first to inform Cicero as proconsul of Cilicia through legates of the fact that Parthian troops had crossed the Euphrates, and in 48 he came to the support of Pompey in the civil war.⁵ Despite his allegiance to the Pompeian cause, Caesar showed his clemency after Pharsalus and confirmed him along with other kings and princes whose realms bordered the province of Syria in their position as friends of the Roman people.⁶ What the influence of this renewal of friendly relations was on subsequent dealings between Commagene and Rome remains unfortunately opaque. Until the Parthian invasion of 40, nothing is known of their interstate contacts. How the bilateral relations developed in the period afterwards will be examined at present.

³ The evidence for the existence of a marriage between Laodice and Orodes consists of Dio, 49.23.4 and an inscription (Kb) found on the abacus of a column at Karakuş. The inscription informs us of the name of Orodes' consort. For a commentary on this inscription, see Wagner (1983) 208-212.

⁴ Cicero, *Q. fr.* 2.11(10).2 writes in February 54 in a letter to his brother that he had taken away from Antiochus the little town (*oppidulum*) that was (*erat*) located *in Euphrati Zeugmate*. On the basis of this letter, several scholars have argued that the town of Zeugma which Pompey had granted to Antiochus, was now removed from Antiochus and integrated into the province of Syria: Dobiáš (1925) 256-257, 261; Watts (1981) 93; Syme (1995) 101. Cf. Wagner (1976) 62-64 and Shackleton Bailey (1980) 192, who claim with different argumentations that Cicero's letter cannot be used as evidence for the removal of the town of Zeugma from Antiochus in 55 or 54. Kennedy / Burgess (1998) 141 believes that the *oppidulum* is to be identified with a small town in the territory of Zeugma. Facella (2006) 241-242 slightly favours the view according to which the *oppidulum* taken away from Antiochus was not the town of Zeugma. She believes that the phrase "*extorsi oppidulum quod erat positum in Euphrati Zeugmate*" does not mean that the town taken away from Antiochus is to be located in the territory of Zeugma on the Euphrates, but that the town *was* formerly located in the territory of Zeugma, but belongs now to a different district.

⁵ Cicero, *Fam.* 15.1.2 (dated to 18 September 51). For more discussion and analysis of the exchanges between Antiochus and Cicero in 51, see Shackleton Bailey (1977) 437-438; Facella (2005a) 94-98. The evidence for the participation of the Commagenians at Pharsalus on the Pompeian side consists of Appian, *BCiv.* 2.49; Caesar, *BCiv.* 3.4.6. Cf. Florus, 2.13.5 does not mention Commagenians among Pompey's allies.

⁶ *B.Alex.* 65.

16.1 *The Parthian invasion*

At some point in the winter of 41/40, Parthian armies crossed the River Euphrates and invaded the province of Syria. The forces under the command of the king's son Pacorus moved thence southward into Judaea and Phoenicia, whereas the units under the command of the Roman deserter Q. Labienus advanced through Asia Minor possibly as far as the Ionian coast.⁷ Never before had the Parthians penetrated into the remote south-western areas of Anatolia, while at the same time holding Syria and most Phoenician cities under occupation. Yet, to ascribe this success solely to the strength of the Parthian armies would probably go too far. Dio informs us that Labienus easily won the allegiance of almost all the Roman armies in Syria when he overran that province, and it is very likely that the advancement into Asia Minor was accomplished with these newly acquired troops in addition to several Parthian detachments.⁸ Moreover, Dio specifically refers to the Commagenian king Antiochus as well as to two other Near Eastern rulers from whom the Roman proconsul P. Ventidius Bassus of Syria, who served as Antony's legate, is said to have extorted a large amount of money in the year 39 in retaliation for the support that they would have granted to Pacorus.⁹ Details concerning the exact nature of the alleged aid rendered by Antiochus are unfortunately not disclosed by the author. The assistance would, however, not necessarily have manifested itself in the provision of military personnel or equipment. Assuming that the city of Zeugma came under Commagenian rule at this time, it is equally imaginable for the king only to have lent the Parthians the opportunity of an unhindered passage of the Euphrates near this place. Although

⁷ On the Parthian invasion of Asia Minor, Syria and Judaea see chapter 8.1 and 10.4.

⁸ Dio, 48.25.1-4; 48.26.3-4. For more discussion of Labienus' advancement, see chapter 8.1.

⁹ Dio, 48.41.5: "Besides accomplishing all this he exacted large sums of money from the rest individually, and large sums also from Antigonus and Antiochus and Malchus the Nabataean, because they had given help to Pacorus" ("Καὶ ὁ μὲν ταῦτά τε διῆγε, καὶ χρήματα πολλὰ μὲν παρὰ τῶν ἄλλων ὡς ἐκάστων, πολλὰ δὲ καὶ παρὰ τοῦ Ἀντιγόνου τοῦ Μάλχου τοῦ Ναβαταίου, ὅτι τῷ Πακόρῳ συνήραντο, ἐσέπραξε"). On the extortion of money from Nabataea, see chapter 13.2.

such a crossing during the first two years of the war is not specifically attested in our extant source material, Dio does inform us that the Parthians habitually traversed the waterway at that point.¹⁰ Besides, the bridge over the Euphrates near Zeugma would have afforded them with the easiest possible route for an attack on the Romans in Syria.¹¹ Provided that the Parthians thus had the intention to cross the Euphrates at this place, it is not unthinkable for Antiochus to have granted them a free passage of the river and even a safe journey through his realm. Certainty concerning the ways in which the king may have furnished support can regrettably not be attained. It is merely evident that he abstained from any opposition against the intruding armies.¹² The prospect of severe sanctions for upholding a hostile stance towards them did without doubt play a role in this decision.¹³ Nonetheless, the fact that his daughter Laodice was united in marriage with the Parthian king Orodes must have constituted a factor of importance as well. The existence of this nuptial bond between the dynasties of Commagene and Parthia may even explain why Antiochus did not revoke his fidelity to the Parthians immediately after the war in 38.

¹⁰ Dio, 49.19.3.

¹¹ Frontinus, *Strat.* 1.1.6, referring to the Parthian deliberations concerning the route that was to be taken for the invasion of Syria in 38, says that the journey via Zeugma would be the shortest (*brevissimum*) one. Kennedy / Burgess (1998) 144 commenting on this passage purports that “describing the route through Zeugma as shorter may have more to do with ease than distance”. On the Euphrates-crossing at Zeugma, see also Wagner (1976) 33-34; Syme (1995) 97-102; Comfort / Abadie-Reynal / Ergeç (2000)

¹² So also Facella (2006) 244, who claims in addition that an attitude of compliance towards the Parthian invaders would have been a sufficient reason for Rome to wrest money from its former ally.

¹³ That the Parthian invaders were liable to inflict penalties upon revolting communities, is demonstrated by Dio, 48.26.3-4, who refers to the cities of Mylasa and Alabanda in Ionia which would have been punished in retaliation for their respective revolts against Labienus. Strabo, 14.2.24 also refers to the abuse of cities by Labienus, and mentions Mylasa explicitly. On the treatment of Mylasa and Alabanda by Labienus, see: Debevoise (1938) 109-110; Magie (1950) 431 and 1280-1281 n.10.

16.2 *The defeat of the Parthians and the siege of Samosata*

The demise of Pacorus on the battlefield near the stronghold of Gindarus in 38 is momentous for having marked the end of the Parthian invasion of Asia Minor and the Levant.¹⁴ With the downfall of the prince, the Parthian forces no longer stood any chance against the superior Roman legions and were forced to surrender. The capitulation did not, however, immediately bring the hostilities to a halt. Dio illustrates that some of the Parthian soldiers in the aftermath of the final *mêlée* on their return homewards were cut off and slain by the Romans before they could reach the bridge (γέφυρα) over the Euphrates.¹⁵ Although the author has not specified what bridge these vanquished troops planned to use, it is plausible to presume that it was their intention to traverse the river at the same spot as they had done earlier in the year when Pacorus had embarked with them on another incursion into Syria. On that occasion, the Parthian prince is said to have built a bridge over the Euphrates in a place presently unknown to us downstream from Zeugma, and to have led his army across it into the region of Cyrrhestica where they were eventually overcome near Gindarus.¹⁶ An escape via that bridge would out of familiarity with the route leading to it have been highly appealing to the Parthian survivors of the war. Moreover, around this time, a certain Pharnaëus (or Channaëus according to Dio) seems to have functioned as a dynast of some sort in the district of Cyrrhestica, and he is said to have been well-disposed to the Parthians.¹⁷ Assuming that the route to the newly constructed bridge over the Euphrates fell under his authority, a passage of the river at that point would have been even more attractive to the soldiers eager to return home.

¹⁴ On the battle near Gindarus and the downfall of Pacorus in 38, see chapter 8.1.

¹⁵ Dio, 49.20.3.

¹⁶ Frontinus, *Strat.* 1.1.6; Dio, 49.19.1-4. Sherwin-White (1984) 304 n.19 holds it possible that the Parthians crossed at Nicephorium.

¹⁷ Frontinus, *Strat.* 1.1.6; Dio, 49.19.2. Debevoise (1938) 117 n.94 argues that regarding the discrepancy in the names of the dynast transmitted in these two sources, "Frontinus is equally reliable and at least a full century closer to the events recorded. The form Pharnaëus is more probable, since it contains the Iranian element *Phar*".

Not all the Parthian forces, however, are said to have headed for the newly constructed bridge in Cyrrhastica. Dio informs us that some of them “fled for refuge to Antiochus in Commagene”.¹⁸ Although no explanations for this manoeuvre are mentioned, it is not unthinkable that these refugees suspected that the Romans were aware of the route leading to the recently built overpass. Anxious of falling victim to an ambush, they sought an alternative and decided to proceed to Antiochus. Under the impression that Antiochus favoured the Parthian cause, they may have pinned their hopes on the Commagenian king offering protection against the Romans and allowing them a free crossing of the Euphrates at Zeugma or Samosata.¹⁹ Whether Antiochus in the end permitted them to pass the river unhindered remains unfortunately unclear. He appears in any case not to have defied the Parthian fugitives, not even when shortly afterwards his realm came under Roman attack.

The military expedition against Antiochus began at some moment in the year 38 under the leadership of Ventidius.²⁰ Dio claims that Antony’s legate initiated the campaign on the pretext that the king had not handed over the refugees, “but in reality because of the vast wealth that he possessed”.²¹ That the riches of the Commagenian king held a great attraction for the Roman general is without doubt conceivable.²² The presence of two palaces for the royal family and countless elaborately designed sanctuaries constructed during the reign of our Antiochus attest to Commagene’s wealth.²³ Yet, it would go too far to reduce the explanation for the launch of this campaign to sheer financial motives. Strategic

¹⁸ Dio, 49.20.4: “... πρὸς τὸν Ἀντίοχον ἐς τὴν Κομμαγενὴν κατέφυγον”.

¹⁹ Facella (2006) 248 argues that the existence of a ford in the Euphrates at Samosata would have given the Parthians a good reason to take refuge with Antiochus. On crossing the Euphrates at Samosata, see Ammianus, 18.8.1; Wagner (1976) 44. Comfort / Abadie-Reynal / Ergeç (2000) 107 purport that there seems to have been a pontoon bridge at this city.

²⁰ The sources for Ventidius’ campaign against Commagene are: Plutarch, *Ant.* 34.2-3; Dio, 49.20.5-21.1.

²¹ Dio, 49.20.5: “... τῇ δ’ ἀληθείᾳ διὰ τὰ χρήματα ἃ πάμπολλα εἶχεν...”. (LCL transl. adapted).

²² Magie (1950) 432 seems to adopt Dio’s interpretation uncritically, claiming that in all likelihood “the real reason for attacking him was a desire to obtain some of his great wealth”. So also Sullivan (1977c) 768-769; Sullivan (1990) 196.

²³ For more details on Commagene’s wealth, including references, see Facella (2005b) 225-228.

considerations are likely to have played a prominent role in the decision to commence a war against Antiochus as well.²⁴ The kingdom of Commagene was situated on the right bank of the Euphrates and via the bridge over the river near Zeugma as well as the ford at Samosata, the Parthians had easy access to Syria and Rome's provinces in Anatolia.²⁵ In order to guarantee the safety of these territories it was thus important for Rome to secure the loyalty of the Commagenian kings. The expedition against Antiochus may accordingly have been undertaken in an attempt to win over Antiochus for the Roman cause. Alternatively, the plan may have been to replace Antiochus with a different ruler more loyal to Rome or perhaps to liquidate the kingdom entirely and turn it into a province.²⁶ Ventidius himself did not, however, get the chance to end the conflict in Rome's advantage. Sometime after the beginning of the offensive, Antony removed him from his command and continued the campaign under his own control, beleaguering the Commagenian king in Samosata. Dio and Plutarch attribute the change of command to Antony's jealousy of Ventidius' successes – an allegation that can be traced back to a source influenced by Augustan propaganda.²⁷ What the outcome of the siege was remains regrettably unclear. Dio and Plutarch both claim that the long duration of the attack and the lack of success prompted Antony to reach an agreement with Antiochus.²⁸ In contrast, Josephus says that Antiochus was

²⁴ So also Facella (2006) 245.

²⁵ Facella (2006) 248 equally regards the ford in the Euphrates at Samosata to have been “una porta di ingresso per i Parti alle province romane orientali”.

²⁶ Buchheim (1960) 80 and Freyburger / Roddaz (1994) cxx-cxxi argue on the basis of Dio, 49.22.2 (cited below) that the purpose of the campaign was to replace Antiochus by a certain Alexander, who had deserted from the Commagenian to the Roman side. After the siege, this Alexander is said to have been assassinated by the Romans on the instigation of Antiochus. Although Dio does not state that Alexander had been singled out to replace Antiochus, the possibility of such a plan cannot be ruled out.

²⁷ Dio, 49.21.1-4; Plutarch, *Ant.* 34.3 is less explicit than Dio, although he refers to Antony's jealousy (φθόνος) in the context of Ventidius' decision not to pursue the Parthians beyond the Euphrates after Gindarus (34.2). Facella (2006) 246 argues, on the basis of the similarities between the two accounts that Dio and Plutarch have in all likelihood made use of a common source influenced by Augustan propaganda and hostile towards Antony. Similar view by Reinhold (1988) 50 and Freyburger / Roddaz (1994) cxx regarding Dio.

²⁸ Dio, 49.22.1-2 says that Antony “secretly opened negotiations with the foe and made a pretended compact with him so that he might have a plausible reason for withdrawing. At any rate, Antony got neither hostages (except two and these of little importance) nor the money which he had

eventually compelled to surrender the city.²⁹ In the *Jewish War* he even states that the military aid provided by king Herod brought the siege to a conclusion.³⁰ Although the role of Herod in the war against the Commagenian king may have been exaggerated by Josephus in his *Jewish War*, on no grounds can the view be rejected that military coercion forced Antiochus to capitulate. Nor is it impossible for the two parties to have come to an arrangement.³¹ Yet, in whatever way the conflict was eventually brought to an end, clear is that Antiochus retained his kingship.

For how much longer Antiochus would have held sway over his realm is unfortunately unclear. He may have been executed in 37 by king Phraates of Parthia. Yet, the passage in Dio, on which this hypothesis is based, does not unambiguously identify Antiochus as the one who fell victim to the purges of the new Arsacid king.³² The Commagenian king may thus have outlived the wave of violence that involved Phraates' family members. The question of the date of Antiochus' death remains unfortunately unresolved. Yet, the discovery of a bronze coin showing on the obverse the head of Antiochus with his name and on the

demanded, but he granted Antiochus the death of a certain Alexander, who had earlier deserted from him to the Roman side" ("διεκηρυκεύσατο αὐτῷ κρύφα, καὶ πλαστάς πρὸς αὐτὸν συνθήκας, ὅπως εὐπρεπῶς ἀπαναστῇ, ἐποιήσατο. ἀμέλει αὐτὸς μὲν οὔτε ὁμήρους, πλὴν δύο καὶ τούτων οὐκ ἐπιφανῶν, οὔτε τὰ χρήματα ἃ ἤτησεν ἔλαβε τῷ δ' Ἀντίοχῳ θάνατον Ἀλεξάνδρου τινὸς αὐτομολήσαντος παρ' αὐτοῦ πρότερον πρὸς τοὺς Ρωμαίους ἐχαρίσατο"). Plutarch, *Ant.* 34.4 reports that "he [Antony, ed.] was glad to make peace with Antiochus on his payment of three hundred talents" ("ἀγαπητῶς ἐπὶ τριακοσίοις σπένδεται ταλάντοις πρὸς τὸν Ἀντίοχον"). Orosius, 6.18.23 says that "Antony made peace with Antiochus, after he had subdued with difficulty a single fort..." ("*Antonius, uno vix castello expugnato, pacem cum Antiocho fecit*", own translation). Sherwin-White (1984) 306 n.24 thinks that the *castellum* to which Orosius refers cannot have been Samosata, which was a large city. He maintains that the *castellum* can possibly be identified with the palace site at Yeni Kale. Cf. Facella (2006) 247 who argues, however, that Orosius can only have meant the city of Samosata.

²⁹ Josephus, *AJ* 14.447; *BJ* 1.322.

³⁰ Josephus, *BJ* 1.322.

³¹ Facella (2006) also argues that "non si possa stabilire se Antioco fu realmente costretto a consegnare Samosata o se si accordò con Antonio per porre fine all'assedio...". Cf. Sherwin-White (1984) 306 n.24, who believes that the versions of the siege related by Josephus on the one hand and Dio and Plutarch on the other hand are not contradictory. See also Magie (1950) 432; Sullivan (1977c) 769; Pelling (1988) 211; Sullivan (1990) 196.

³² Dio, 49.23.3-4. Doubt that Antiochus had succumbed to Phraates' purgatories has also been raised by Sullivan (1977c) 775-776; Facella (2006) 249. Cf. Wagner (1983) 213.

reverse a bull with the name of his son and successor Mithradates, has led scholars to believe in the existence of a joint-reign of both kings.³³ When this supposed co-regency would have begun and for how long it would have lasted is unclear.³⁴

16.3 Commagenian presence at Actium

Nothing is known of the relations between Rome and Commagene from the end of the siege of Samosata in 38 until the Battle of Actium in 31. In this latter encounter, king Mithradates of Commagene is said by Plutarch to have participated on the side of Antony along with several other Near Eastern rulers.³⁵ In what way the king would have supported Antony remains unfortunately diffuse. It is evident only that Octavian did not remove Mithradates from his kingship after the war as a result of his favour for Antony.³⁶ Whether the king took on the title of φιλορώμαιος only after his confirmation as ruler of Commagene by Octavian is uncertain.³⁷ Yet, like his father, he seemed to have been keen to exhibit his friendly relations to the Romans.

³³ Sullivan (1990) 197; This coin type has been described by Taşyürek (1975) 42 in the following way: Obv. “BA ΜΕΓ ANTIOXOY” with head of Antiochus I with Armenian tiara facing the right. Rev. “BA ΜΕΓ ΜΙΘΡΑΔ ΦΜ ΦΙΛ” depicting a bull facing to the right. Taşyürek reconstructs the text as follows: “BA(ΣΙΛΕΩΣ) ΜΕΓ(ΑΛΟΥ) ANTIOXOY; BA(ΣΙΛΕΩΣ) ΜΕΓ(ΑΛΟΥ) ΜΙΘΡΑΔ(ΑΤΟΥ) ΦΙΛΟΡΩΜ(ΑΙΟΥ) ΦΙΛ(ΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ)”.

³⁴ Wagner (1983) 206 believes that the joint-regency began shortly after the confirmation of Antiochus as king by Pompey in 64.

³⁵ Plutarch, *Ant.* 61.1.

³⁶ Dio, 52.43.1; Facella (2006) 299.

³⁷ Epigraphic attestations of the epithet φιλορώμαιος: Şahin (1991) 101-105; Facella (2006) 307-309. The letters “ΦΜ” on the reverse of the coin mentioning both Antiochus and Mithradates may be an abbreviation for the title φιλορώμαιος. This reconstruction is, however, uncertain. The coins of the two Cappadocian kings who present themselves with this title, Ariobarzanes I (r.95-62) and Ariobarzanes III (r.52-42) do not use an abbreviation to refer to the epithet φιλορώμαιος. On these coins, see Wroth (1899) xxxii-xxxiii, 39-40, 42.

Conclusion

The political relations between Rome and Commagene in the period of civil war remain to a large extent unknown. It is, however, clear that despite the fact that Antiochus carried the title *philoromaïos* and displayed it in all public inscriptions, his actions within this time frame were not always friendly towards the Romans. During the Parthian invasion of Syria and the Near East, he seemed to have stood firmly on Parthian side. As his kingdom was easily accessible for the Parthian via crossings at Zeugma and Samosata, he did not have much choice but to show allegiance to the Parthians in the two and a half years that the invasion lasted. How the interstate affairs developed after the end of the war remains unfortunately unclear. It is only evident that Antiochus' successor supported Antony at Actium, but was eventually left in power by Octavian.

PART III

TYPES OF CONDUCT

The period of civil war between Caesar's assassination in 44 and the defeat of Antony and Cleopatra in the Battle of Actium in 31 did not merely see armed clashes between Roman armies, but also a proliferation in new administrative practices, especially following the enactment of the Triumvirate in November 43 by the *lex Titia*. It is well-known that during the period of the Triumvirate, many measures were taken against traditional custom. Not only were the proconsuls appointed by the triumvirs themselves, they even controlled the selection of other magistrates to a large extent.¹ Nevertheless, in spite of all the unlawful and despotic measures taken by the triumvirs, Fergus Millar has argued convincingly in a classic article from 1973 that "the Triumvirate was an institution which was created by a form of law, and which was superimposed on, but did not replace, the institutions of the *res publica*".² Numerous indications in our extant source material indicate, for example, that the people's assemblies were still summoned for the passage of laws, or that the magistrates were not all directly appointed by the triumvirs.³ The administrative institutions of the *res publica* did thus not cease to function in the age of Roman civil war that lasted from 44 until 31. Whether a similar continuity can be detected in the conduct of Rome and Near Eastern kings and princes towards one another, is an issue that needs to be examined at present. In order to determine the extent to which this behaviour altered during the period of civil strife, I shall compare the political interaction between Rome and Near Eastern rulers in the period from 44 until 31 with the bilateral relations between these two parties in the period before this civil war. Such a comparative analysis, on the one hand from the perspective of the Near Eastern kingdoms and principalities (chapter 17) and on the other hand from the perspective of Rome (chapter 18), will shed light on the extent to which the conduct of each of the

¹ Evidence for the nomination of magistracies made by the triumvirs has been brought forward by Frei-Stolba (1967) 80-83 and Millar (1973) 51-52 = (2002) 244-245.

² Millar (1973) 61 = (2002) 260.

³ Millar (1973) 52-54 = (2002) 246-248.

parties towards one another between 44 and 31 was typical of our period of civil war.

17 CONDUCT OF NEAR EASTERN RULERS TOWARDS ROME

The conduct of Near Eastern rulers towards Rome in the period of civil war from 44 until 31 was highly diverse, as can be gathered from the discussion in part II. At least six different types of behaviour have been identified, all of which will be under examination in this chapter. While the first four sections focus on requests of various sorts, the last two deal with the involvement of Near Eastern kingdoms and principalities in Rome's foreign wars and civil conflicts respectively. The analysis includes both conduct initiated by Near Eastern monarchs and notables, as well as activities undertaken in response to Rome, although it is important to appreciate that in several instances it remains unclear which of the two parties involved took the initiative. For each type of conduct under discussion, a comparison with the period before 44 will be made in order to establish to what extent the behaviour of Near Eastern monarchs and other potentates between the years 44 until 31 was typical of our period of civil war.

17.1 Requests for intervention in internal affairs

The practice of kings and princes of approaching Rome with requests to intervene into the internal affairs of their own realm is one of the most frequently attested types of conduct undertaken by Near Eastern monarchs, potentates and other members of the ruling elite towards Rome from 44 until 31. The relatively high quantity of these entreaties among all the known behaviour may not engender surprise, given the prevalence of those appeals prior to the period of civil war.¹ Yet, it is important to stress that the sizable share of this sort of conduct in the

¹ On the requests made to Rome by Near Eastern rulers for intervention into the internal affairs of their realm prior to the period of civil war, see below.

sources does not necessarily reflect the actual extent of such pleas in proportion to other interstate actions. The evidence for the political behaviour of Near Eastern rulers towards Rome is almost entirely drawn from a small selection of Greek and Latin literary sources, whose primary focus of attention was anything but the foreign affairs of kingdoms and principalities on the fringe of Rome's empire. Brief references to cases of interstate contact between Near Eastern rulers and Rome seem only to have been made if relevant for the topic under discussion. Accordingly, it is highly doubtful that the literary sources provide us with more than a mere glimpse of the behaviour undertaken by Near Eastern monarchs and other aristocrats towards Rome. A remarkable exception in this respect is the conduct of Judaeans rulers, officials and notables, of which we are better informed than the behaviour of other rulers as a result of the preservation of Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities* and *Jewish War*, the only two extant works concentrating solely on the political history of one specific kingdom.² Valuable as the insights produced by Josephus are, however, the *Jewish Antiquities* and *Jewish War* are unlikely to have rendered a full report of all the bilateral relations between Judaea and Rome.³ Hence, it is safe to conclude that the behaviour of Near Eastern rulers towards Rome as gleaned from the sources is not by definition characteristic of the actual conduct undertaken by these monarchs and potentates towards Rome. The proportion of the total number of requests made by Near Eastern monarchs and

² Particularly relevant in this context are the documents relating to Judaea's affairs gathered in Josephus, *AJ* 14.190-264. The compilation includes *senatus consulta*, letters and several decrees issued both by Roman magistrates and by communities in the Near East, on which see among others Schürer (1973) 272-274.

³ Following his collection of official records, Josephus, *AJ* 14.265 informs his readership that "there are many other such decrees passed by the Senate and the αὐτοκράτορες of the Romans, relating to Hyrcanus and our nation, as well as resolutions of cities and rescripts of provincial governors in reply to letters on the subject of our rights, all of which those who will read our work without malice will find it possible to take on faith from the documents we have cited" ("πολλὰ μὲν οὖν ἔστιν καὶ ἄλλα τοιαῦτα τῇ συγκλήτῳ καὶ τοῖς αὐτοκράτορσι τοῖς Ῥωμαίων δόγματα πρὸς Ὑρκανὸν καὶ τὸ ἔθνος ἡμῶν γεγεννημένα, καὶ πόλεσιν ψηφίσματα, καὶ γράμματα πρὸς τὰς περὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων δικαίων ἐπιστολὰς ἀντοπεφωνημένα τοῖς ἡγεμόσιν, περὶ ὧν ἀπάντων ἐξ ὧν παρὰ τεθεῖμεθα πιστεύειν τοῖς ἀναγνωσομένοις οὐ βασκάνως ἡμῶν τὴν συγγραφὴν πάρεστιν").

aristocrats to Rome for intervention into the internal affairs of their own dominions in relation to the amount of other types of conduct may thus have been higher or lower than the picture that emerges from our sources. Yet, essential as it is to be aware of these limitations, the significance of our material is not to be underestimated, in particular not with regard to the diversity it reveals in the sort of appeals made to Rome as well as the kind of actors and institutions involved in such pleas. The kind of entreaties and the type of actors and governing bodies that were embroiled form crucial elements to be taken into account when analysing the degree to which the political conduct of Near Eastern monarchs, other potentates and administrative institutions towards Rome between 44 and 31 was typical for the period of civil war.

Requests made to Rome by Near Eastern dynasts that Rome become engaged in the internal dealings of their own realm are attested as early as 41, in the aftermath of Philippi. Following the downfall of Brutus and Cassius, Antony moved eastwards into Asia Minor and made a tour through Anatolia and the Near East to settle affairs in that corner of the Roman world and to raise money for the soldiers that had fought in the war against the tyrannicides.⁴ On several stages of his journey he was approached by embassies consisting of so-called “influential Judaeans”, who had come to bring forward accusations against Herod and his associates.⁵ The delegation that met Antony in Bithynia reportedly charged Herod and his brother Phasaël with holding *de facto* power within Judaea at the expense of Hyrcanus, who as ἐθνάρχης and High Priest was the official leader of the Judaeans.⁶ Although details concerning the aims of this deputation have not been disclosed by our extant sources, it is highly probable that included among the

⁴ Appian, *BCiv.* 5.1; 5.3; 5.22; Plutarch, *Ant.* 23.1; Suetonius, *Aug.* 13.3; Dio, 48.2.1; 48.24.1. On Antony’s tour through the eastern provinces in 41, see Bengtson (1977) 153-167; Huzar (1978) 129-130; 149-155; Lange (2009) 26-27.

⁵ Josephus, *AJ* 14.302: “Ἰουδαίων οἱ ἐν τέλει”; *BJ* 1.242: “Ἰουδαίων οἱ δυνατοί”. On these embassies and the socio-political group which these delegations may have represented, see chapter 10.1.

⁶ Josephus, *AJ* 14.301-303; *BJ* 1.242.

objectives of the ambassadors was the removal of Herod and Phasael from the political scene altogether, whatever their official positions within Judaea were at that moment. This same ambition may have underlain the decision of the “influential Judaeans” to send two more delegations to Antony – one to meet him at Daphne near Antioch, and another at Tyre – after the first legation in Bithynia had been declined adjudication by the triumvir.⁷ The dispatch of these embassies proved, however, not to be detrimental to the position of Herod and Phasael. On the contrary, at Daphne Antony nominated the two brothers as τετράρχαι of Judaea.

The requests for intervention into the internal affairs of a principality did thus, in this case, not lead to the results aspired to by the litigants. A variety of plausible explanations can be given for Antony’s decision not to let the complainants have their way, all of which have been extensively discussed in part II.⁸ Yet, whatever the motives were for declining the appeals of Herod’s foes, the ways in which Antony dealt with this conflict among the Judaeian ruling elite illustrates that the triumvir was willing on request to mediate in an internal power struggle and even to side with one of the parties at variance.⁹ Monarchs, potentates and other dignitaries within the Near Eastern kingdoms and principalities who faced political opposition or were engaged in a conflict must have realised that Antony did not categorically dismiss pleas to settle domestic rivalries and disputes. Appeals for intervention in an internal power conflict were accordingly presented to the triumvir by some of those sovereigns and notables in the hope of receiving a favourable response. The Egyptian queen Cleopatra was one of them when she successfully convinced the triumvir in a meeting at Tarsus

⁷ Josephus, *AJ* 14.324-329 and *BJ* 1.243-247 reveals neither the exact nature of the accusations nor the objectives of the delegations sent to Antony at Daphne and Tyre respectively.

⁸ See chapter 10.1.

⁹ As Gruen (1984) 111 n.75 has noted, “it is not... always easy to draw a sharp line between applications for support and requests for arbitration”. Nonetheless, it is still useful to differentiate between the two kinds of appeal, because in the case of arbitration, the mediator is expected to be impartial. This is not the case when two parties in conflict try to win the support of another power.

in the year 41 to have her sister Arsinoe and the former στρατηγός of Cyprus, Serapion, eliminated. Arsinoe had been raised as queen by the faction of king Ptolemy XIII during the Alexandrian War to serve as a rival to Cleopatra.¹⁰ With the emergence of Caesar as victor in the war, Arsinoe was, however, taken captive, transferred to Rome to be staged in Caesar's triumph, and subsequently relegated to Ephesus where she lived in the Temple of Artemis. Despite the fact that after these events Arsinoe no longer held an official post within the Ptolemaic kingdom, Cleopatra may still have regarded her as a potential threat to her reign, and have desired to pay off the old grudge that she cherished against her. Since Ephesus was situated within the bounds of the Roman province of Asia, over which Antony held control, she asked her future paramour to have Arsinoe eradicated – a request with which he was prepared to comply.¹¹ Serapion is not known to have played a role in this episode, and he was definitely not viewed as a menace to Cleopatra's position. Instead, without permission from the Egyptian queen, he had provided Cassius with a fleet in the year 43 to fight Dolabella. Following the downfall of the two tyrannicides at Philippi, Serapion fled to Tyre and managed initially to escape punishment. However, when Cleopatra petitioned Antony to do away with her former στρατηγός, he ultimately suffered the death penalty for his treasonous activity.

In contrast with the outcome of the meetings that the “influential Judaeans” had with Antony, Cleopatra's efforts to have the triumvir settling old scores on her behalf did thus repay her trouble. Our evidence does not, however, reveal in all instances Rome's responses to pleas for interference in an internal conflict or rivalry. The obscure role of Antony in the quarrel between Herod and his mother-in-law Alexandra concerning the appointment of her son Aristobulus to the High

¹⁰ On the assassination of Arsinoe and Serapion, see chapter 9.2.

¹¹ Following the Battle of Philippi, Octavian and Antony had agreed that the latter would make his way to the East to raise money for the troops and to settle affairs in that corner of the Roman world (Appian, *BCiv.* 5.1; 5.3; 5.22; Plutarch, *Ant.* 23.1; Suetonius, *Aug.* 13.3; Dio, 48.2.1; 48.24.1).

Priesthood can demonstrate that.¹² At some point after the Parthian invasion and following the defeat of the Parthian-backed Judaeian king Antigonus in 37, the new king Herod had installed a certain Hananel as High Priest in Jerusalem, since the previous incumbent of this post, Hyrcanus, could no longer resume his sacerdotal function because of the physical deformity that he had got during the Parthian incursion of Judaea. Alexandra, not only mother of Herod's wife Mariamme, but at the same time daughter of this Hyrcanus, disagreed with the appointment of this new nominee to the High Priesthood, as she had hoped for the elevation of her own son, Aristobulus, to that office. In order to get her own way, Alexandra resorted to aid abroad. Through her friendship with Cleopatra, she expected that Antony would force Herod to replace Hananel with Aristobulus. Eventually, Herod did yield to the pressure that was exerted on him, and he deposed the new appointee, assigning the High Priestly functions to his brother-in-law. But whether an explicit command made by Antony was necessary for Herod to do as Alexandra wished, or whether the possible threat of a reprimand from the side of the triumvir prompted Herod to change his mind, remains unclear.¹³

The pleas for Roman intervention in the internal affairs of Near Eastern kingdoms and principalities that have so far been revealed all pertained to requests for arbitration in a domestic power conflict and to calls for active support to a particular faction involved in a political feud. In the hope that Rome would deal with internal disputes or would settle an old grudge, the so-called influential Judaeans and the Egyptian queen Cleopatra made overtures to this foreign power. Yet, kings, princes and other notables from the Near East made appeals of a different nature to Rome in the period of civil war as well. According to Josephus, Herod would, for example, have asked the kingship for his future brother-in-law

¹² On this quarrel, see chapter 1.7.

¹³ On the conflict between Herod, Alexandra and Cleopatra concerning the appointment of a High Priest, see chapter 10.6.

Aristobulus when he came to Rome in the year 40 following his narrow escape from the Parthian invaders in Judaea.¹⁴ Although several scholars have dismissed the idea that Herod planned to solicit the kingship for the brother of his fiancée, Josephus' version of Herod's intentions cannot be discarded on the ground of his selfishness.¹⁵ For the present discussion, it is merely important to realise that evidence exists – albeit not indisputable – for requests made to Rome to nominate a prince as king over one of the Near Eastern principalities.

The practice of Near Eastern kings, princes and other notables of approaching Rome with pleas for intervention into the internal affairs of their realm was thus not merely limited to appeals for adjudication in a dispute or to calls for assistance to one of the contending parties. Recourse to Rome was also sought in cases where a Near Eastern prince strove for the kingship. The entreaties for interference into the internal dealings of a kingdom or principality made in the period of civil war from 44 until 31 were thus not all of the same nature. The question that remains to be addressed, however, is to what extent such requests were typical of our age of civil strife. A glance at the period prior to the eruption of political discord illustrates that the sheer act of Near Eastern rulers and potentates of approaching Rome with appeals for intervention into the domestic affairs of their own dominions was in itself not emblematic for our era of civil war. Already in the first half of the second century BC, Near Eastern rulers and dignitaries turned to Rome with such pleas.¹⁶ Well-recorded are, for example, the requests for Roman support that the Egyptian ruler Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II made in the 160s and 150s BC in

¹⁴ Josephus, *AJ* 14.386-387.

¹⁵ See chapter 10.4. As we have seen, several convincing arguments can indeed be brought forward that would lend credence to Josephus' report.

¹⁶ This conduct was not limited to Near Eastern rulers, but was also shown by dynasts from Asia Minor, such as the Cappadocian princes Orophernes and his half-brother Ariarathes who both in the 150s BC appealed to Rome to mediate in the conflict that had erupted between them following the death of their father Ariarathes IV in 163. For more details on this conflict and Rome's role in it, see among others Will (1967) 312-314; Gruen (1984) 582-583; Canali de Rossi (1997) 532-534; Ballesteros Pastor (2008) 46-48; Van Wijlick (forthcoming).

his attempt to secure control over the island of Cyprus, which at that time came under the authority of his elder brother and co-regent Ptolemy VI Philometor with whom he was at variance.¹⁷ Equally renowned is the case of Alexander Balas who claimed to be a son of Antiochus IV Epiphanes and asked for Roman aid in 153/152 with which he planned to win the Seleucid throne at the cost of Demetrius I.¹⁸ Yet, illustrative as these examples are for the prevalence of requests for Roman interference into the internal affairs of Near Eastern kingdoms and principalities from the second century BC onwards, they do as it is not prove that there were no features of such appeals whatsoever characteristic of our period of civil war. On the contrary, a striking difference emerges from our comparative analysis of the entreaties for Roman intervention made by Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II and Alexander Balas on the one hand, and the pleas put forward by Near Eastern rulers and notables in the age of civil war on the other hand – a distinction which may to some degree be explained by the friction among Rome's ruling aristocracy and the administrative changes that occurred in the era of civil strife. The difference in question pertains to the Roman institutions to which the suppliants reported themselves. Whereas requests for intervention made by Near Eastern rulers and potentates between 44 and 31 were directed to the most powerful Roman governor in the East, the pleas of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II, Alexander Balas, and several others in the second century BC, were put forward to the Senate in Rome, either by the petitioner in person or through an embassy.¹⁹ To be more precise, all the other known requests for interference into the internal affairs of a

¹⁷ On the conflict between Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II and Ptolemy VI Philometor with reference to the rule over Cyprus specifically, and the division of the rule over the Ptolemaic kingdom in general, as well as the requests to the Senate, see among others Bouché-Leclercq (1904/1963) 27-45; Will (1967) 303-306; Gruen (1984) 692-708; Huß (2001) 544-589; Hölbl (2001) 183-189, all with references.

¹⁸ On the request for aid that Alexander Balas made, see among others: Polybius, 33.18.6-14; Will (1967) 315-316; Gruen (1976) 91-93; Walbank (1979) 557; 561; Gruen (1984) 666-667; Sherwin-White (1984) 48-49; Habicht (1989) 362; Habicht (2006) 214-215.

¹⁹ The pretender to the Seleucid throne Tryphon would have sent gifts to the Senate in order to secure Rome's support in the conflict against Demetrius II (Diodorus 33.28a). On the alleged request for aid, see Gruen (1984) 668-669; Habicht (1989) 368; Habicht (2006) 222.

Near Eastern kingdom or principality in our era of civil war were made either to Antony or to a legate under his command. Obviously, it cannot be excluded that other proconsuls and even the Senate functioned as addressees of such pleas as well. If that was the case, their involvement in these interstate dealings has eluded our extant sources. It is at any rate not inconceivable that the predominance of Antony and his subordinates among the recipients of requests for intervention – the image that thus emanates from our existing sources – is an accurate reflection of reality. Antony held sway over the eastern Mediterranean as triumvir in all the documented cases of such pleas made to him. He would even have specifically received the task to set the East in order following the defeat of Cassius and Brutus at Philippi. The various rulers and notables from the Near East must have been aware of Antony's extraordinary position of power within the Roman state. From that perspective, it is understandable that these Near Eastern petitioners turned to Antony with appeals for settling their internal affairs. Yet, it is also possible that those dynasts went to see Antony because he was the nearest representative of Roman power.

Yet, explicable as the move of Near Eastern rulers to approach Antony and his inferiors is, the practice of asking governors in the region to deal with the internal affairs of a kingdom or principality was in itself not typical of the period of civil war. Before the eruption of political strife in 44, some of the demands for support were also made to Roman officials in the Near East, such as the plea that Antiochus XIII Asiaticus appears have put forward to Pompey in 64 to restore him to the Seleucid throne,²⁰ or the appeal that was made about eight years later (in 56) by the deposed king of Parthia, Mithradates, to the proconsul of Syria, A.

²⁰ Appian, *Mith.* 106; Justin, *Epit.* 40.2.2-5 and Malalas 212 inform us of the plea put forward by Antiochus XIII Asiaticus. Pompey refused to comply with the request and had the former kingdom transformed into the new Roman province of Syria. For the appeal submitted by Antiochus XIII Asiaticus to Pompey as well as the latter's response, see among others Appian, *Syr.* 49; 70; Plutarch, *Pomp.* 39.2; Velleius, 2.37.5; Bevan (1902) 267; Will (1967) 423-424; 426-429; Sartre (2001) 442. See chapter 1.5.

Gabinus, asking for aid in his attempt to recover the kingship.²¹ Addressing a Roman governor in the periphery to deal with the internal issues of a kingdom and principality was, accordingly, a phenomenon not unique to our age of civil war.

17.2 Divided Rome: The mobilisation of Rome's representatives in the East

The analysis above has revealed that during the period of civil war, requests put forward by Near Eastern rulers and notables for Roman intervention into the internal conflicts of their realm were, as far as the evidence reveals, all directed to Roman governors and minor officials in the eastern Mediterranean. The Senate is not recorded to have been encountered with such petitions. By the time Rome plunged into a civil war in 44, the pre-eminent role that this body had played in the preceding century as recipient of pleas for settling domestic feuds within Near Eastern kingdoms and principalities seems already to have come to an end. As we have seen, several explanations can be offered for the fact that not the Senate but a handful of Roman governors were approached with requests to deal with internal disputes. Yet, whatever motivated the Near Eastern sovereigns and dignitaries during the era of civil dissension to approach Roman commanders in the provinces, it is clear that they were willing in the first place, just as their predecessors earlier on, to have a foreign power embroiled in their own domestic political quarrels. That the outcome of requests for mediation in a conflict, or calls for active help in a struggle, could be unfavourable, was a potential risk which the petitioners had to be prepared to put up with. Even during the period of civil war when such pleas were directed to governors instead of the Senate, the possibility of an appeal not producing the desired effect was present. A mere look at the dismissal of the Judaeian embassy that came to see Antony in Bithynia in 41 with

²¹ On Mithradates' request to Gabinus for assistance in regaining the throne of Parthia, see Dio, 39.56.1-2.

complaints about Herod and his brother suffices to endorse that view. However, it is important to realise that those who suffered a rejection from Rome were not in all cases dissuaded from making another attempt to have their request granted. Antony's refusal to give the delegation of the supposedly leading Judaeans a hearing did not, for example, keep them from sending deputations on two more occasions – one to meet Antony at Daphne and one at Tyre.²² The initiators of these two embassies were evidently determined to obtain the triumvir's support, and probably had the genuine expectation that they could win Antony for their cause. Why would they else have put the time and effort into it? Yet, as will become apparent, during the age of civil strife, not all Near Eastern rulers and notables who saw their initial plea for support in a domestic quarrel rejected by Rome decided to put forward another request to the same administrative institution, apparently fearing that their supplication would be rejected again. In a similar way, rulers who were engaged in a struggle for power and saw their rival or opponent receiving aid from Rome did not all approach the same Roman institution that had promised the support in the hope to have the initial decision repealed. A glance at some of the events that occurred in relation to the power conflict in Judaea in the early 30s BC involving Antigonus, a scion from the Hasmonaean family, and Herod illustrates how certain rulers could act under such circumstances, how they tried to muster support for their own cause.

The struggle for power in Judaea was set in motion with the Parthian invasion of Syria in the winter of 41/40.²³ At some point after the launch of that incursion, Antigonus managed to persuade the invaders to assist him in his effort to oust Hyrcanus from his position as ἑθνάρχης and to win the Judaeian throne for himself.²⁴ With Hyrcanus ultimately deposed and imprisoned, the venture proved to be successful, even though the Parthians failed to capture Herod, one of the

²² For more details on the dispatch of embassies to Antony by the Judaeans in 41, see chapter 10.1 and 10.2.

²³ On the Parthian invasion, see chapter 8.1.

²⁴ Josephus, *AJ* 14.330-332; *BJ* 1.248-249.

main opponents of the new regime who, following his escape from Jerusalem, made his way via Alexandria, Rhodes and Brundisium to Rome, where he was eventually granted the kingship in a meeting of the Senate.²⁵ For Antigonus, who had been nominated as king by the Parthians in the meantime, Rome's recognition of a rival to the throne did not at first constitute a serious threat to his position. As long as the Parthians retained their control over the Levant, his authority would not be in danger. Yet, with the expulsion of the Parthian aggressor from Asia Minor and Syria by the proconsul P. Ventidius Bassus in the course of 39, Antigonus could no longer rely on Parthian aid and was all on his own in his struggle against Herod. The future of his rule depended henceforth entirely on Rome's willingness to assist Herod in his attempt to obtain full sovereignty over his new realm. Any compassion from the Senate or the two triumvirs Antony and Octavian would not be realistic to envisage. Now that he had been declared an enemy of Rome for his cooperation with the Parthians, he could not expect the decree regulating the bestowal of kingship upon Herod to be repealed. In order to ward off his own downfall, Antigonus seems, therefore, to have placed his bet on the feeble loyalty of the Roman commanders who had been dispatched into Judaea to hold up the Herodian cause. With financial allurements, Antigonus hoped to keep them from rendering effective support to his opponent. Of the Romans active in Judaea to stand by Herod, the aforementioned Ventidius, a legate called Pompaedius Silo and a certain Machaeras (possibly a prefect) all appear to have been approached by Antigonus with promises of money in return for their favour.²⁶ That this strategy was successful at the outset is suggested by our literary sources. Josephus not only implies that Ventidius' premature departure from Judaea's battlefield in 39 is to be ascribed to bribes offered by Antigonus, he also claims that the withdrawal of Silo and his army into the winter quarters later in the same year was motivated by the financial benefits of which

²⁵ See chapter 10.4.

²⁶ On bribes supposedly offered to Ventidius, Silo and Machaeras, see chapter 10.5.

Antigonus would have held out the prospect.²⁷ The retreat of these two commanders forced Herod to give up his achievements in Judaea proper, and made him focus on the conquest of the Galilee and Idumaea instead.²⁸ Rewarding as the practice of offering bribes to individual Roman governors and their subordinates thus initially was, these tactics failed to provide Antigonus with lasting Roman support necessary to maintain his position in the long term. The personal appeal for military aid that Herod made in 38 to Antony at Samosata in Commagene can be considered to be the point at which the tables turned. The triumvir was willing to meet the demands of Rome's candidate for the kingship over Judaea, and with the troops that Antony had placed under the command of Gaius Sosius, Herod eventually managed to inflict a final defeat upon his Hasmonaean rival and to obtain control over his kingdom.²⁹

Successful as the ending of Judaea's power struggle thus was for Herod, a more interventionist approach of Ventidius and Silo would presumably have hastened the events that resulted in Antigonus' downfall. Whether the financial allurements to which Josephus refers contributed in the end to Ventidius' and Silo's retreat, remains unfortunately unclear.³⁰ The possibility cannot be ruled out, at any rate. At the time of their withdrawal from Judaea (in 39), Rome was still engaged in the war against the Parthian invaders. In those conditions, it would have been difficult for the Senate in Rome and for Antony to ensure that all the governors dispatched to the Near East would adhere to the official senatorial line and triumviral ordinances.³¹ The remoteness between Senate and promagistrates on the fringe of Rome's empire as well as the long distance between Antony and his legates gave Rome's representatives in the Near East the opportunity to follow

²⁷ Josephus, *AJ* 14.392-193, 395, 406-412, 435-438; *BJ* 1.288-289, 291, 297-302, 317-319.

²⁸ Josephus, *AJ* 14.413-433; *BJ* 1.303-316.

²⁹ On the appeal made by Herod to Antony and the subsequent hostilities leading to the capture of Jerusalem and the fall of Antigonus, see chapter 10.5.

³⁰ It has to be borne in mind that other explanations for Rome's initial passivity can be put forward as well, all of which have been discussed in chapter 10.5.

³¹ Cf. Schalit (1969) 691.

a more independent course. In defiance of the decree conferring the kingship upon Herod, Ventidius and Silo most likely anticipated that they could get away with withholding vital support from the new appointee. Antigonus was probably aware of the relative autonomy that Rome's governors and minor officials in the Levant enjoyed. With financial rewards put into prospect, he hoped to capitalise on it.

In order to counteract the Senate's decision to present Herod with the kingship over Judaea, Antigonus thus tried – apparently with some success – to secure the goodwill of Rome's governors in the Near East. The Hasmonaean king was, however, not the first and only ruler who was engaged in an internal conflict and endeavoured to obtain the support of a Roman functionary in reaction to the backing that an internal opponent had received from a different Roman official or from the Senate. In 63, a claimant to the Judaeian throne called Hyrcanus followed a similar course. Ever since the demise of queen Alexandra Salome in 67, he had been engrossed in a struggle for the High Priesthood and the kingship with his brother Aristobulus.³² With the aim of ending the succession crisis, both brothers dispatched embassies to M. Aemilius Scaurus, who as Pompey's subordinate had entered Damascus in the year 65. Having heard the statements made by the two opposing parties, Scaurus eventually decided in favour of Aristobulus. Hyrcanus was, evidently, displeased with the outcome, and when Pompey finally made his appearance in Judaea in the spring of 63, the case of the succession to the Judaeian throne was reconsidered. At first, Pompey refrained from rendering a verdict, but after Aristobulus had initiated a military offensive against Hyrcanus, Pompey repealed Scaurus' earlier judgement and chose the latter's side.

The manner in which Hyrcanus tried to secure Roman acknowledgment thus bears a strong resemblance to Antigonus' effort to win Roman assistance. In

³² On the conflict between Aristobulus and Hyrcanus that erupted after the death of their mother Alexandra in 67, see chapter 1.7.

reaction to the support that a political rival had received from the Senate or from a specific Roman governor, both rulers endeavoured to muster the support of different Roman governors or officials in the Near East. Antigonus' behaviour in the early 30s was thus not only typical of our period of civil strife. Both during and before this period, it proved to be possible for dynasts in the eastern Mediterranean to exploit the freedom that individual Roman officials enjoyed due to the remoteness between the periphery and the centre of the empire.

17.3 Requests for the enlargement of territories

In our discussion of the political conduct of Near Eastern kings, princes and other dignitaries towards Rome in the period of civil war only the requests that these rulers and notables made for intervention into the domestic affairs of their own realm have so far been reviewed. As illustrated above, the internal matters in which Rome was asked to interfere related to political conflicts, succession crises and the promotion of princes and other notables to the position of king. Yet, profuse as the requests to deal with any of these issues were, it is important to realise that Near Eastern rulers did not merely approach Rome with pleas to set the domestic affairs in order. The petitions put forward to Rome could take on an entirely different character as well. Our extant sources bear, for example, witness to several calls for the enlargement of a kingdom or principality. The Judaeans ἑθνάρχης Hyrcanus is one of the Near Eastern rulers attested to have made requests for the territorial extension of his realm. He sent an embassy to meet Antony at Ephesus in 41 to ask him for the restoration of those locations that had been conquered by the Tyrians while Cassius was in the Near East.³³ The ambassadors found a sympathetic ear and the triumvir ordered Tyre by edict to return the lands that had been seized from the Judaeans ever since Cassius had

³³ On the request for the restoration of the territories seized by the Tyrians with bibliography and references, see chapter 10.2.

entered Syria, early in 43. Several years later in the winter of 37/36, it was Cleopatra who reputedly beseeched Antony to have certain territories in the Near East added to her realm. In particular, she seems to have set her eye on the Princedom of Chalcis, Judaea and Nabataea – domains which came (albeit partly) under Ptolemaic influence during the heyday of the Ptolemaic Kingdom in the third century BC.³⁴ Eventually, Antony would give in to the demands of his mistress and conferred upon her the cities on the Phoenician coast south of the Eleutherus River (with the exception of Sidon and Tyre), the Princedom of Chalcis, the balsam and palm plantations around Jericho that were a part of Herod's realm, as well as some portions of Nabataea. Two years later, additional regions were assigned to the Ptolemies and divided among Cleopatra and her children – a territorial reorganisation better known as the so-called Donations of Alexandria.³⁵ Although any specific evidence is absent, it is very likely that also this time Cleopatra had a say in the arrangement.

It may not come as a surprise that the practice of Near Eastern rulers to put forward pleas to Rome for the enlargement of the territories under their control was not typical of our period of civil war. Nonetheless, the evidence for requests for territorial expansion seems with regard to the Near East to be limited to a plea that Hyrcanus as High Priest and ἐθνάρχης submitted at some point in the 40s BC to the Senate in Rome for the restoration of the townships in the Great Plain of Esdraelon to Judaea – an area that probably Pompey had taken away from Judaea in 63.³⁶

³⁴ For details of these demands, including bibliography and sources, see chapter 9.4.

³⁵ On the so-called 'Donations of Alexandria', see chapter 9.4.

³⁶ The request for the restoration of the Great Plain of Esdraelon to Judaea is itself not attested in our sources. Josephus has, however, preserved a fragment of an otherwise unknown *senatus consultum* (AJ 14.211-212), which is dated to January or February of the year 44 and makes mention of an embassy that had spoken on behalf of Hyrcanus in the Senate in Rome. Although the transmitted portion of the decree does not refer in any way to requests that Hyrcanus' envoys submitted to the Senate, it is possible that the fragment of a *senatus consultum* which is excerpted in AJ 14.207-210 and refers to the transfer of the villages in the Great Plain of Esdraelon to Judaea (AJ

17.4 The conclusion of an alliance with Rome against a third party

In 33, king Artavasdes of Media Atropatene seems to have made a compact with Antony to serve each other as allies against the Parthians and Octavian respectively.³⁷ In the previous year, Antony had undertaken a military expedition against Armenia, captured the king and granted a part of his kingdom to Artavasdes of Media Atropatene. The possessions of the Atropatenian king were threatened by Artaxias, the son of the captured Armenian king who lived in exile at the Parthian court. In all likelihood to assure himself of support in the case of a combined Parthian-Armenian offensive, Artavasdes appears to have concluded an alliance with Antony. Although the details of the agreement between both parties remain obscure, it is unlikely that the two participants had concluded their pact with the intention to launch a war against Parthia; it was probably merely a defensive agreement against potential Parthian and Armenian hostilities.

The practice of a Near Eastern king or prince of concluding an alliance with Rome against a third party cannot be regarded as conduct typical of our period of civil war. In 161 or 160, an alliance between the Judaeans and Rome was created, allegedly stipulating to serve each other as allies if one of them would come under attack of a third party.³⁸ Although the Judaeans did not receive any active military aid from Rome when it came subsequently under Seleucid attack, the leaders of Judaea must have considered the pact with Rome to be beneficial to such an extent

14.207-208) as well as to ambassadors dispatched by Hyrcanus to the Senate in Rome (*AJ* 14.209), constitutes a part of the decree given at *AJ* 14.211-212. Provided that this connection is valid, then it is very plausible to assume that the delegates sent to Rome at some point before February 44 had asked the Senate to see the Great Plain of Esdraelon, restored to the territory of Judaea. That parts of the text at *AJ* 14.200-210 belong to the *senatus consultum* preserved at *AJ* 14.211-212 has been argued by Schürer (1973) 272-275, n.23.

³⁷ See chapter 15.1.

³⁸ *I Macc.* 8.17-32. The alliance was concluded after an embassy had been sent to Rome in which the famous Eupolemus participated.

that they asked twice for a renewal of the compact – a bid with which Rome eventually complied.³⁹

17.5 Involvement in a foreign war

The behaviour of Near Eastern kings, princes and other members of the ruling elite towards Rome in the period of civil war was not merely limited to requests for intervention in the internal political affairs of their own dominions, to pleas for territorial expansion and to the conclusion of an alliance. Interference in the political affairs of Rome occurred as well. Some evidence attests, for example, to Near Eastern rulers being involved in Rome's foreign wars. Their involvement could manifest itself in support for either side. During the Parthian invasion of Syria and Asia Minor in the period from 40 until 38, the Commagenian king Antiochus, for instance, fought for the cause of the aggressor.⁴⁰ Why he chose to render active military backing to the invaders is not entirely clear. Several different plausible explanations can be put forward. Yet whatever impelled Antiochus to give aid to the Parthians, it clear that he paid dearly for his alliance with the aggressor. He came under Roman attack in 38 and was eventually besieged by Antony at Samosata.

For his raid against Antiochus, Antony seems not only to have relied on his own Roman troops. The newly installed king of Judaea, Herod, came to Antony's support and even have contributed, if Josephus is to be believed, to the subjugation of the Commagenian ruler.⁴¹ Herod had come to Samosata to ask Antony for more aid in his attempt to quell all opposition in his homeland and to become the undisputed leader of Judaea. Possibly, Herod anticipated that the

³⁹ *I Macc.* 14.24; 15.15-24: renewal of the alliance in 139; Josephus, *AJ* 13.259-265: renewal of the alliance around 132 or in 105.

⁴⁰ See chapter 16.2. Cicero did not trust the Commagenian king when he was proconsul in Cilicia in 51. On his untrustworthiness see Facella (2005).

⁴¹ So Josephus, *BJ* 1.322. Cf. *AJ* 14.445-447 which does not state that Herod's arrival at Samosata contributed to the end of the siege.

demonstration of his own military capacities would convince Antony of his usefulness as a ruler.⁴²

Two years after the expulsion of the Parthians, Antony launched his own military expedition against Parthia. In the initial stages of the campaign, he received aid from the Armenian king Artavasdes, who not only placed horsemen at his disposal, but also led him through his own kingdom into Media Atropatene. The support granted to Antony proved in the end, however, not to be of much help. Not long after the invasion of Media Atropatene, Artavasdes of Armenia gathered his troops and withdrew from the battlefield into his own kingdom. Having suffered severe losses, Antony was eventually forced to make his own retreat. To what extent the flight of the Armenian king contributed to this outcome, remains, however, arguable.⁴³

It is clear that Near Eastern rulers were not merely involved in Rome's foreign wars during our age of civil war. The Emisene ruler Iamblichus cooperated, for example, with Rome when the Parthians invaded in 51, while Antipater and Hyrcanus sent help to Caesar's ally Mithradates of Pergamum during the Alexandrian War of 48.⁴⁴

17.6 Involvement in a civil war

Of all the types of conduct undertaken by Near Eastern kings, potentates and other dignitaries towards Rome that have been discussed so far, none can be regarded as conduct typical for our period of civil war. The only kind of behaviour that occurred between 44 and 31 and is characteristic of our age of civil strife is thus the support granted by Near Eastern rulers and notables to Roman factions

⁴² See chapter 10.5.

⁴³ See chapter 14.2.

⁴⁴ Cicero, *Fam.* 15.1.2.

engaged in a domestic power conflict. Support for a Roman faction at variance with another political group is not only attested in our age of civil turmoil. Also during the Year of the Four Emperors (AD 69), we see a Near Eastern ruler participating on the side of one of the factions. It was the Judaeian king Agrippa II who supported the cause of Vespasian when he travelled to Rome in that year.⁴⁵ Several instances of aid allotted to one of Rome's contending parties have emerged from the extant sources for our period of civil war. The prince of Chalcis, Ptolemy, son of Mennaeus, seems, for example, along with Sampsigeramus and Iamblichus, φύλαρχοι of the Emisenoι, to have assisted Q. Caecilius Bassus, a former Pompeian equestrian officer, in his rebellion against the governor of Syria, Sextus Julius Caesar, in 46, and subsequently against other Roman generals who had been dispatched to quell the insurgence.⁴⁶ The Ptolemaic queen, for example, made preparations in 43 for the dispatch of a fleet to Octavian and Antony. Although unfavourable winds are said to have prevented her from executing her plan, Cassius would still have undertaken a punitive expedition against her – were it not for the fact that the campaign was ultimately aborted on Brutus' orders.⁴⁷

With the absence of any direct military confrontation between Rome's opposing political factions in the eastern Mediterranean for the next decade, none of the Near Eastern rulers were involved in rendering support to any of the conflicting parties. It was only in the run-up to the Battle of Actium that Near Eastern kings and princes are attested again to be entangled in Rome's internal political conflict. Several of those rulers provided military assistance to Antony in the war against Octavian. The Nabataean king Malichus, the king of Media Atropatene and Mithradates of Commagene all appear to have allied themselves with Antony. The latter may even have attended in person.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Wellesley (2000) 43.

⁴⁶ See chapters 5.1, 6.1, 4.1.

⁴⁷ On the four legions sent off to Dolabella and on the plan dispatch of a fleet to Antony and Octavian, see chapter 3.2.

⁴⁸ See chapters 13.3, 15.2, 16.3.

The reasons behind the decision of the aforementioned rulers to assist a faction in Rome's domestic political conflict are highly diverse and cannot be reduced to one particular motive.⁴⁹ Some appear to have hoped to receive benefits as a reward for their support, whereas others were pressurised by a particular Roman faction or by other Near Eastern rulers. In this respect, the proximity of the leader of a faction to the Near Eastern kings – Cassius and Antony both had their power base in the eastern Mediterranean – played a vital role as well. Nevertheless, whatever prompted these rulers to support one particular Roman party in an internal conflict, it is clear that not all of them favoured the ultimately victorious faction. Backing the wrong horse did, however, not necessarily bring about adverse consequences. Although Cleopatra was threatened by Cassius with a punitive expedition, Herod was famously forgiven by Octavian in 30 for his conduct in the civil wars and confirmed in his kingship.⁵⁰

Conclusion

The behaviour of Near Eastern rulers towards Rome in the period of civil war from 44 until 31 has thus for the most part not been typical of an era of internal strife. Only the grant of support to a Roman faction that was engaged in a domestic political conflict can be regarded as behaviour characteristic for a period of civil war. Unfortunately, the evidence for this type of behaviour predominantly comes from our era of civil strife. Only one example of support granted to a faction in an internal conflict has been identified outside our own period: in AD 69 the Judaeen king Agrippa II supported the cause of Vespasian in Rome. The lack of evidence does not reflect a reluctance of Near Eastern rulers to get involved in Rome's civil wars. Rather, it mirrors the gradual disappearance of nominally independent kingdoms and principalities on the fringe of Rome's empire.

⁴⁹ See the different chapters for possible explanations.

⁵⁰ Josephus, *AJ* 15.183-198; *BJ* 1.386-393.

18 ROME'S CONDUCT TOWARDS NEAR EASTERN KINGDOMS AND PRINCIPALITIES

The behaviour of Rome towards Near Eastern kingdoms and principalities proved to be highly diverse. The study in part II has already shown that this conduct was partly undertaken in response to various requests put forward by Near Eastern rulers and other dignitaries, and partly on Rome's own initiative. This chapter will focus on the different type of actions taken on by Rome towards these kingdoms and principalities, whether in response to a specific plea or not. The various kinds of conduct that have been identified are as follows: the conduct of war against a Near Eastern kingdom; the conclusion of an alliance with a Near Eastern king or prince against a third party; the arrangement of dynastic intermarriage; demands for financial or military contributions; the judgement over past conduct of Near Eastern rulers; the nomination or removal of kings or princes; and the grant or seizure of territories. All of these will be discussed in what follows.

18.1 At war with a Near Eastern kingdom

One of Rome's most intrusive and devastating types of behaviour towards a Near Eastern kingdom was without doubt the launch of a military campaign. In our period of civil war, three of these wars were conducted. The first of those expeditions commenced in 38 in the aftermath of the Parthian invasion and was directed towards king Antiochus I of Commagene. This ruler had granted shelter to some Parthian refugees following Parthia's final defeat in the battle near Gindarus. It was possibly the provision of this safe haven that prompted the Roman commander Ventidius to initiate his assault on Commagene, although financial and strategic considerations may have played a role as well. Yet,

whatever impelled the Romans to begin the campaign, it is evident that in the same year, hostilities came to an end.¹

Two years later, Antony began his Parthian expedition that ended in disaster. Moving in the first instance towards the north and subsequently through Armenia across the Araxes into the kingdom of Media Atropatene, the advance came to a halt at the city of Phraaspa before having reached Parthia. Substantial losses and the defection of the Armenian auxiliary troops forced Antony eventually to make his retreat.² In order to penalise king Artavasdes of Armenia for his premature withdrawal from the battlefield, Antony undertook a campaign against his kingdom in the year 34 and managed to capture him. The triumvir advertised his success in Armenia widely on coinage, in the hope that it would not merely compensate for his failure in Media Atropatene, but also counterbalance Octavian's earlier success against Sextus Pompeius.³

Twenty years before the capture of king Artavasdes of Armenia, Crassus launched his military campaign into Parthia and was eventually defeated at Carrhae in 53. It does not need any further elaboration to show that military expeditions against foreign kingdoms and principalities were not typical of our period of civil war, even though the rationale behind the expeditions may possibly have been related to the competition among Rome's ruling elite, in particular between Antony and Octavian – a rivalry which eventually culminated in the Battle of Actium, Antony's defeat and the rise of sole rule in Rome.

18.2 The conclusion of alliances for the conduct of a war against a third party

In at least two of the three offensive wars fought in our period of civil war, Rome received support from Near Eastern kings, princes and other notables. Antony

¹ See chapter 16.2.

² See chapter 8.2.

³ See chapter 14.2 with references to the relevant coinage.

was, for example, assisted by Herod in his expedition against Antiochus I of Commagene,⁴ and for the Parthian campaign he received armed assistance from king Artavasdes of Armenia. Iberian and Celtic cavalry would have served as his auxiliaries in this expedition as well.⁵ Vital as these pacts with Near Eastern kings and princes were, it is evident that Rome did not only conclude alliances with the aim of securing sufficient support for an offensive military campaign against a kingdom or principality. Compacts whereby Rome promised aid to a Near Eastern king or prince who was entangled in a conflict with another ruler were made as well. Antony, for example, in 33 came to an agreement with king Artavasdes of Media Atropatene to serve each other as allies against the Parthians and Octavian respectively. A year earlier, Antony had captured the Armenian ruler Artavasdes and occupied his kingdom, granting a part of it to the Atropatenean Artavasdes. The new Armenian king, Artaxias, had in the meantime escaped his realm and fled to Parthia. With the probable intention of forestalling a joint Parthian-Armenian attack on the Armenian possessions of the Atropatenean ruler, Artavasdes appears to have made an alliance with Rome, which initially proved to be beneficial for him. However, when Antony removed the Roman soldiers from Armenia not much later as part of the preparations for the war against Octavian, the Parthian ruler Phraates and the Armenian ruler Artaxias succeeded in expelling Artavasdes from Armenian territories.⁶

Rome's practice of concluding alliances with a Near Eastern king or prince engaged in a conflict with another ruler cannot be regarded as conduct typical of our period of civil war. In 161 or 160, Rome entered, for example, into a treaty

⁴ See chapter 10.5.

⁵ See chapter 8.2.

⁶ See chapter 15.1.

with the Judaeans, which reputedly stipulated that both parties were to serve each other as allies if one of them would come under attack of a third party.⁷

18.3 *The arrangement of dynastic intermarriage*

At the time of Rome's entrance on the political stage of the Near East in the beginning of the second century BC, dynastic intermarriage was a phenomenon that had already proliferated in that region for several millennia, and would continue to be a widespread occurrence for the remainder of the Roman Republic and even beyond our age of civil war well into the Imperial period.⁸ Each generation of rulers was apparently aware of the potential benefits that the creation of family ties through marriage could yield. Not only did a marriage between members of different royal families in the Near East give the monarchs and potentates who were involved the opportunity to establish friendly relations with each other, it also enabled them to involve themselves in the internal affairs of each other's kingdom or principality. In order to avoid any disputes with the Ptolemaic rulers, the Seleucid king Antiochus III is, for example, said to have first betrothed and later married off his daughter Cleopatra to Ptolemy V Epiphanes in the 190s BC.⁹ About half a century later, the marriages that were concluded between Cleopatra Thea, a daughter of the Egyptian ruler Ptolemy VI Philometor, and three different Seleucid kings (Alexander Balas, Demetrius II and Antiochus VII Sidetes) seem to have contributed to influence and patronage that the Ptolemies exerted over the final Seleucid pretenders to the throne.¹⁰ Rome neither

⁷ See chapter 17.4.

⁸ Sullivan (1990) 14-15.

⁹ Diodorus, 28.12; cf. Porphyry, *BNJ* 260 F47, who reports that Antiochus arranged the marriage between his daughter and Ptolemy as part of his plan to add Egypt to his dominions. See also Polybius, 18.51.10; Livy, 33.40.2; 35.13.4; Walbank (1967) 623 lists the evidence for the year in which the betrothal would have taken place and concludes that 196 is clearly the correct date; Will (1967) 161-162; Ogden (1999) 82-83; Huß (2001) 499-500; Hölbl (2001) 140.

¹⁰ On the marriages, see *I Macc.* 10.51-58. Ogden (1999) 147-149.

interfered in the arrangement of dynastic intermarriages, nor was it itself involved as one of the participating members. Only in the 30s BC do the benefits of this system appear to have been understood by at least one Roman official. It was Antony who in 33 married off Alexander Helios, one of the sons he bore with Cleopatra, to Iotape, the daughter of king Artavasdes of Media Atropatene. As we have seen in part II, the marriage was in all likelihood connected with the so-called Donations of Alexandria from 34. Alexander was granted the lands east of the Euphrates if we are to believe Dio – a claim often dismissed as Augustan propaganda by modern scholars, but which can be explained as part of a policy to establish secure rule throughout the Near East. Since Media Atropetene was not ruled by the Ptolemies, marrying a Ptolemaic prince to an Atropatenean princess was an exquisite way to gain influence into one of the areas given to Alexander.¹¹

Although there are no other examples known of Rome arranging marriages between different Hellenistic dynasties, it would go too far to regard this kind of conduct typical of our period of civil war. It would be better to see it as a novel attempt to reorganise the eastern Mediterranean by employing established Hellenistic methods in the expectation that such would increase the chances of success.

18.4 Demands for financial and military contributions

One of the most frequently attested types of behaviour conducted by Rome towards Near Eastern kings, princes and other notables in the period of civil war was the demand for financial and military contributions. Several of such requirements have been testified in our extant sources and extensively reviewed in part II. In 43, it was Cassius who asked Cleopatra and her governor of Cyprus,

¹¹ On the marriage, see chapter 9.4.

Serapion, for vessels – an order with which the latter, unlike the Egyptian queen, complied.¹² In the same year, Cassius also imposed a tax of seven hundred talents upon the Judaeans. As has been demonstrated earlier, Cassius was in need of funds and military equipment to extend and solidify his power base in the eastern Mediterranean. It is from this perspective that the heavy taxes on Judaea are in all likelihood to be understood.¹³

Following the defeat of Cassius and Brutus at Philippi, Antony made a tour through Asia Minor and the Near East, and imposed heavy contributions on Judaea, possibly the Princedom of Chalcis and several other kingdoms and principalities in Anatolia.¹⁴ It is very plausible that the financial contributions were inflicted on these different lands as a means to raise funds for the soldiers who had fought under his and Octavian's command. Antony would have agreed with Octavian in the aftermath of Philippi to levy money in the East for the payment of their troops.¹⁵

It thus appears to be evident that our known cases of demands for financial and military contributions were specifically linked to the circumstances that came with the civil war – such as the need for funds and military equipment as well as the settlement of veterans from the internal political conflict. That does not mean that the exaction of money was unique to our period of civil war. A regular tribute appears, for example, to have been imposed on Judaea as part of Pompey's reorganisation of that state in the late 60s.¹⁶

¹² See chapter 3.2.

¹³ See chapter 4.2.

¹⁴ See chapter 10.4, 11.1.

¹⁵ See previous note.

¹⁶ See chapter 1.7.

18.5 Rome calling Near Eastern kings and princes to account

Two instances of Rome calling Near Eastern kings and princes to account for their behaviour are known to have occurred in our period of civil war. In the year 41, while Antony made his tour through the eastern provinces, he summoned the Egyptian queen Cleopatra to meet him at Tarsus to account for her involvement in the conflict with Brutus and Cassius. She was reputedly accused of having failed to render support to the Caesareans in the war against the tyrannicides, and of having given aid to Cassius. Cleopatra came to see her future paramour and managed to have the indictment dropped.¹⁷

Several years later, in 34, Antony bade Herod to come to see him at Laodicea to defend himself against the accusation that he was responsible for the death of the High Priest Aristobulus in 35. Antony had been urged by Cleopatra on behalf of Aristobulus' mother, Alexandra, to take on the case. In the end, the allegations were dropped and Herod was acquitted.¹⁸

It is clear that the summoning of Cleopatra was related to the events that had occurred while the triumvirs on the one hand and Cassius and Brutus on the other hand were engaged in a political and armed conflict. As such, this kind of behaviour was unique to our age of civil war. Yet, the bidding of Herod in 34 to account for his behaviour stood in relation to an event that had no connection whatsoever with Rome's civil war. It is, therefore, questionable whether summoning a Near Eastern ruler to give account for certain behaviour in a context not related to the civil war was typical of our era of civil strife.

¹⁷ Appian, *BCiv.* 5.8; Plutarch, *Ant.* 25.1; see chapter 9.1.

¹⁸ See chapter 10.6.

18.6 Nomination and removal of Near Eastern rulers

The nomination or removal of a Near Eastern ruler is a practice that belongs without doubt to one of the most frequently attested types of behaviour. In 43, Dolabella, the illegal Roman proconsul who had been declared an enemy by the Senate and whose command over the province of Syria had been rescinded and transferred to Cassius, granted Cleopatra the right to have her son Ptolemy Caesar called king of Egypt.¹⁹ In the same year, Cassius rewarded Herod for his speed in collecting the required tribute by appointing him as στρατηγός of Coele Syria.²⁰ In 41, Antony nominated Herod and Phasael as tetrarchs over Galilee and Jerusalem and surroundings.²¹ In 40, Herod was officially given the kingship in a meeting of the Senate in Rome.²² Four years later, Antony put to death a certain Lysanias, ruler of the Principdom of Chalcis.²³ In 31, he may also have executed the ruler of the Emisenoι, Iamblichus.²⁴

It is clear that the nomination and removal of rulers in the Near East as well as the decision of Antony and of the Senate to confirm certain rulers were types of behaviour not specifically characteristic of our age of civil war. For almost each of these cases it is evident that circumstances related to a civil war did not play a role in the decision to nominate certain rulers. It is more likely that most of the aforementioned nominations constituted a part of Antony's plan to reorganise the Near East in such a way that it would be politically stable. An earlier administrative rearrangement of the Levant and other parts of the eastern Mediterranean had been undertaken by Pompey in the 60s BC. As part of the reorganisation of the Near East, Pompey removed and installed several rulers. In

¹⁹ Dio 47.31.5; see also chapter 3.2.

²⁰ See chapter 4.3.

²¹ See chapter 10.3.

²² See chapter 10.4.

²³ See chapter 11.3.

²⁴ See chapter 12.2.

63, after the Judaeans brothers Hyrcanus and Aristobulus had come to see him, each asking for the confirmation of the kingship, Pompey eventually sided with Hyrcanus, and confirmed him in his position as High Priest and ἑθνάρχης of the Judaeans.²⁵

18.7 Territorial rearrangements

Territorial rearrangements are quite frequently testified in the extant sources to have occurred in the period of civil war. It is obvious that this type of conduct from the side of Rome was not typical of an era of internal political strife. Even before the onset of domestic conflict following the assassination of Caesar, Rome implemented changes to dominions over which the Near Eastern rulers had control. Well-known are the territorial reductions that Pompey imposed on Judaea and on Armenia.²⁶ Within our period of civil war, perhaps most evocative are the extensive modifications that Antony carried through involving Cleopatra and the three children he bore with her. In 37/6 he would have granted the Egyptian queen substantial parts of the Near East, and in 34, the territorial rearrangement comprised theoretically almost the entire Near East. We have already seen that this radical reform was not the work of an unrestrained lover under the spell of the Egyptian queen. The rationale behind these grand reforms seems to have been the political and administrative stabilisation of the Near East, by placing it under the rule of one kingdom which had already existed for over two and a half centuries. Instead of incorporating the Near East in its entirety into the Roman empire by imposing provincial rule, Antony placed it under the hegemony of the Ptolemies and indirectly under the aegis of Rome.²⁷

²⁵ See chapter 1.7.

²⁶ See chapter 1.1, 1.7.

²⁷ On the territorial donations and the so-called 'Donations of Alexandria', see chapter 9.4.

Conclusion

My analysis of the behaviour of Rome towards Near Eastern kings, princes and other dignitaries in the period from 44 until 31 has demonstrated that most types of conduct undertaken within this time frame were not characteristic of an age of civil war. The only kind of behaviour that is typical of a period of civil war to a certain extent is the demand of financial and military contributions, although it has to be borne in mind that money was also exacted from some of the Near Eastern kingdoms and principalities in periods during which Rome's internal politics was peaceful.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has looked at the interstate contacts between Rome and Near Eastern dynasts in the period of Roman civil war from 44 until 31 from different perspectives; I set out to provide an analysis of the political relations between Rome on the one hand and Near Eastern kingdoms and principalities on the other hand in this period. The inquiry consisted mainly of the identification and explanation of individual instances of bilateral interaction (Part II). On the basis of these findings, an attempt has been made to examine to what degree the conduct of each of the parties was typical of our age of civil strife (Part III). Since the thesis has almost entirely focused on specific cases of political contact, it may appear difficult to move away from the particular and to recognise trends in the behaviour of the participants on both sides. What this thesis reveals is the wide variety in political dealings between representatives of Roman power on the one hand and Near Eastern rulers on the other hand. These differences can be seen, for example, in the attitude of the dynasts towards Cassius and Brutus. Whereas almost all the rulers in the Levant supported the tyrannicides while they held sway over the eastern Mediterranean, Cleopatra remained faithful to Dolabella and the triumvirs. On the other hand, Rome's representative in the East equally did not treat all the kingdoms and principalities in the same way. Some realms, such as Judaea, saw heavy taxes imposed on them and territories taken away, whereas others – most notably the Ptolemaic Kingdom – experienced a territorial expansion at the hands of Antony. Yet, despite all these varieties, it is possible when observing our discoveries at a greater distance to draw further conclusions.

In the Introduction, I argued against the application of the patron-client terminology to Rome's foreign relations. The main arguments for this point of

view were the lack of any evidence for the existence of formal interstate *clientela*, and the actual nature of the relations that Rome had with kings, queens, other rulers and communities. My study of Rome's bilateral dealings with kingdoms and principalities in the Near East during the period of civil war has confirmed this judgement. Indeed, rulers in the Near East were all, with the exception of the Parthian kings, to a large degree dependent upon Rome. None of them enjoyed full freedom to act as they liked or thought fit. Antony's unilateral grant of territories to Cleopatra in 37/36 and to her children in 34 at the cost of the domains of other dynasts in the eastern Mediterranean aptly demonstrates this. Also illustrative of the inferiority is the ease with which Rome's governors in the East – most notably Cassius and Antony – interfered in the internal administration of kingdoms and principalities by implementing personal changes. Subordinate as Near Eastern rulers in relation to Rome were, the factual existence of an unequal interstate relationship does not allow us to conclude that Rome viewed kings and princes in the East as her clients. An association of *clientela* was based on specific mutual obligations, whereby the client rendered support to the patron in exchange for protection. Rome's bilateral connections with rulers in the Near East during our age of civil war, however, in no way resemble these characteristics. Applying the patron-client terminology to those relations would thus be a distortion of the past.

The same conclusion can be drawn with the regard to the existence of official treaties regulating the behaviour of Rome and Near Eastern rulers involved. There is no evidence for such formal compacts in our period of civil war arranged by Rome and kingdoms and principalities in the Near East. Although it cannot be excluded that treaties were made, it seems that Rome refrained from entering into official accords altogether, bearing in mind the reluctance with which such treaties were concluded with Hellenistic kingdoms in the second century BC,

as demonstrated by Gruen.¹ Rome apparently disliked the idea of committing herself to the obligations that formed an integral part of such formal arrangements. Rome preferred the informal connection of *amicitia*, which did not impose certain duties upon the parties involved. Some of the rulers during our age of civil strife had been recognised as friends or as friends and allies of Rome – most notably the Judaeans ἑθνάρχης Hyrcanus at Caesar's intercession in 47. My study has revealed that these associations could influence the conduct of Rome and of its friends in the Near East.

As demonstrated in Part I, interstate *amicitia* was a phenomenon which Rome encountered in the third century BC. It was an informal institution that originated in the eastern Mediterranean and which Rome gradually embraced. That certain rulers during our period had a relationship based on *amicitia* with Rome is thus not peculiar and testifies to continuity in the framework within which the interstate relations took place. My examination of the interaction between Rome and Near Eastern kingdoms and principalities during our era of civil war in Part III has also shown continuity in conduct with earlier periods. Striking in this respect is the freedom which Rome's personnel in the Near East thought to enjoy to a certain degree from decisions from above. The attempts of the Judaeans Antigonos to forestall Roman support for Herod in the early 30s BC by successfully bribing the Roman legate Silo to abstain from assistance to Herod demonstrates this best. It also illustrates that Near Eastern dynasts were aware of this possibility and tried to benefit from it. Equally remarkable is the continuity in the practice of embassies from Near Eastern rulers or other groups from this region to Rome's most powerful representative in the region. In our case, this was predominantly Antony, who as triumvir was the supreme leader over the eastern Mediterranean from 41 onwards (a position formalised in 40 in the Pact of

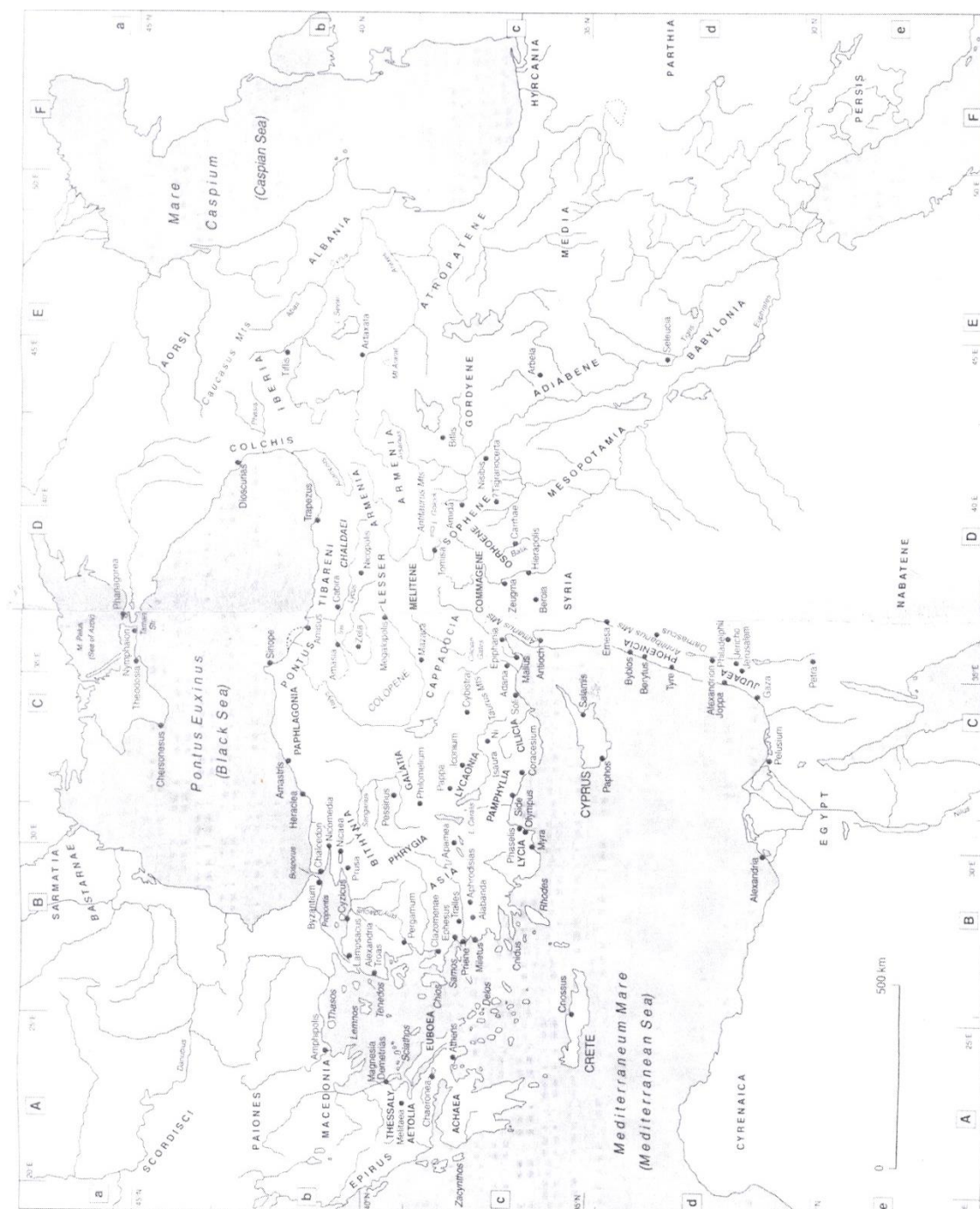
¹ Gruen (1984) 13-53.

Brundisium). The practice of Near Eastern dynasts of dispatching embassies to Rome with requests to mediate in a dispute or to grant support in a conflict goes back to the third century BC. It was common for those embassies to be addressed to the Senate. However, with the rise of powerful politicians, such as Marius, Sulla and Pompey, and strife within the Senate during the Late Republic, those deputations were increasingly often sent to governors in the region. In that sense, the practice of delegates to approach Antony in the 40s and 30s BC was in agreement with established practice.

The analysis of the political relations between Rome and Near Eastern kingdoms and principalities during the period of civil war from 44 until 31 has thus revealed that not only the framework within which these dealings took place but also the individual instances of interaction were characterised by continuity with previous periods. Whether similar conclusions can be drawn with regard to later periods of civil strife remains the subject for a different study.

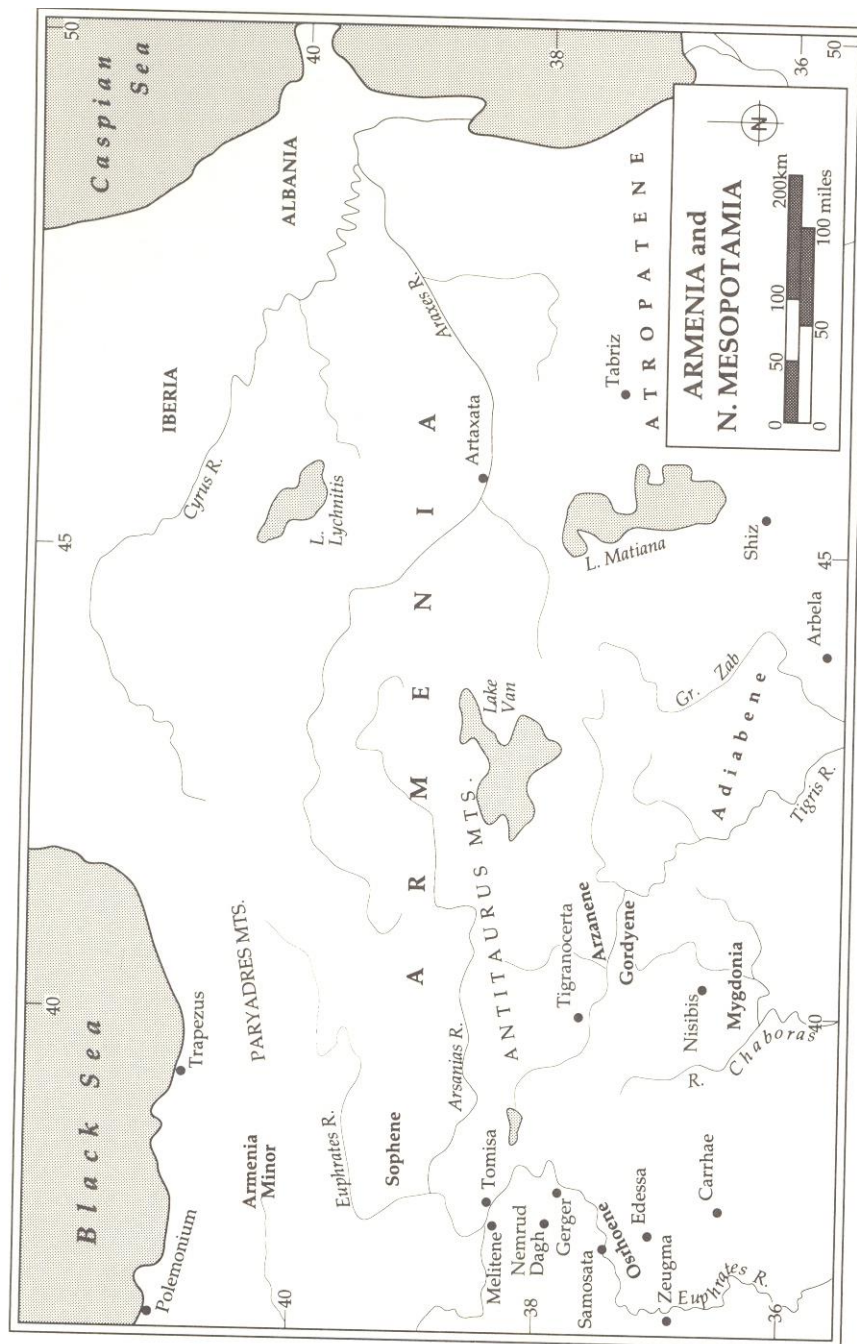
APPENDICES

Map 1 The eastern Mediterranean



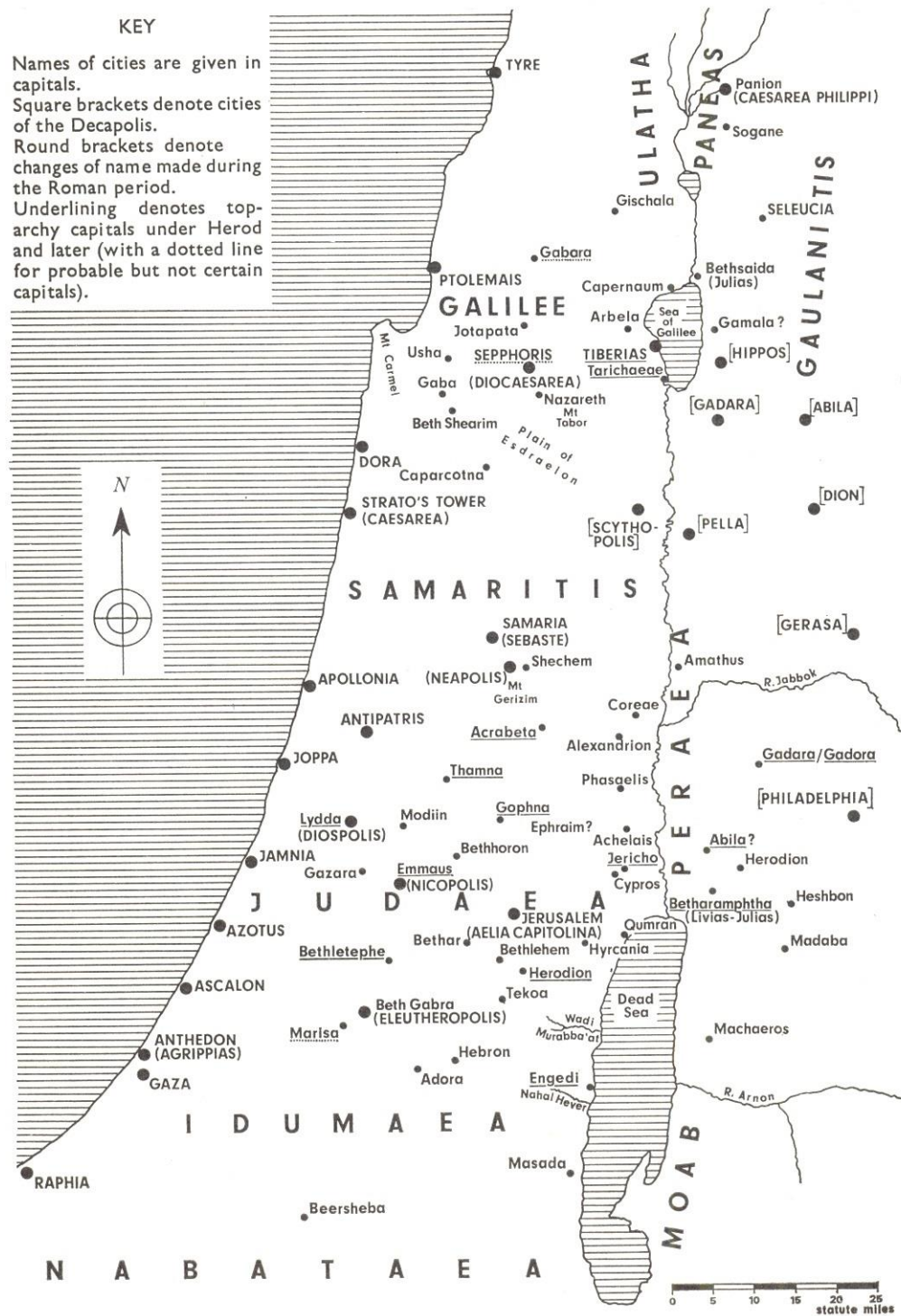
Source: Seager (2002) xvi.

Map 2 Armenia and North Mesopotamia



Source: Sullivan (1990) xxvi.

Map 3 Judaea



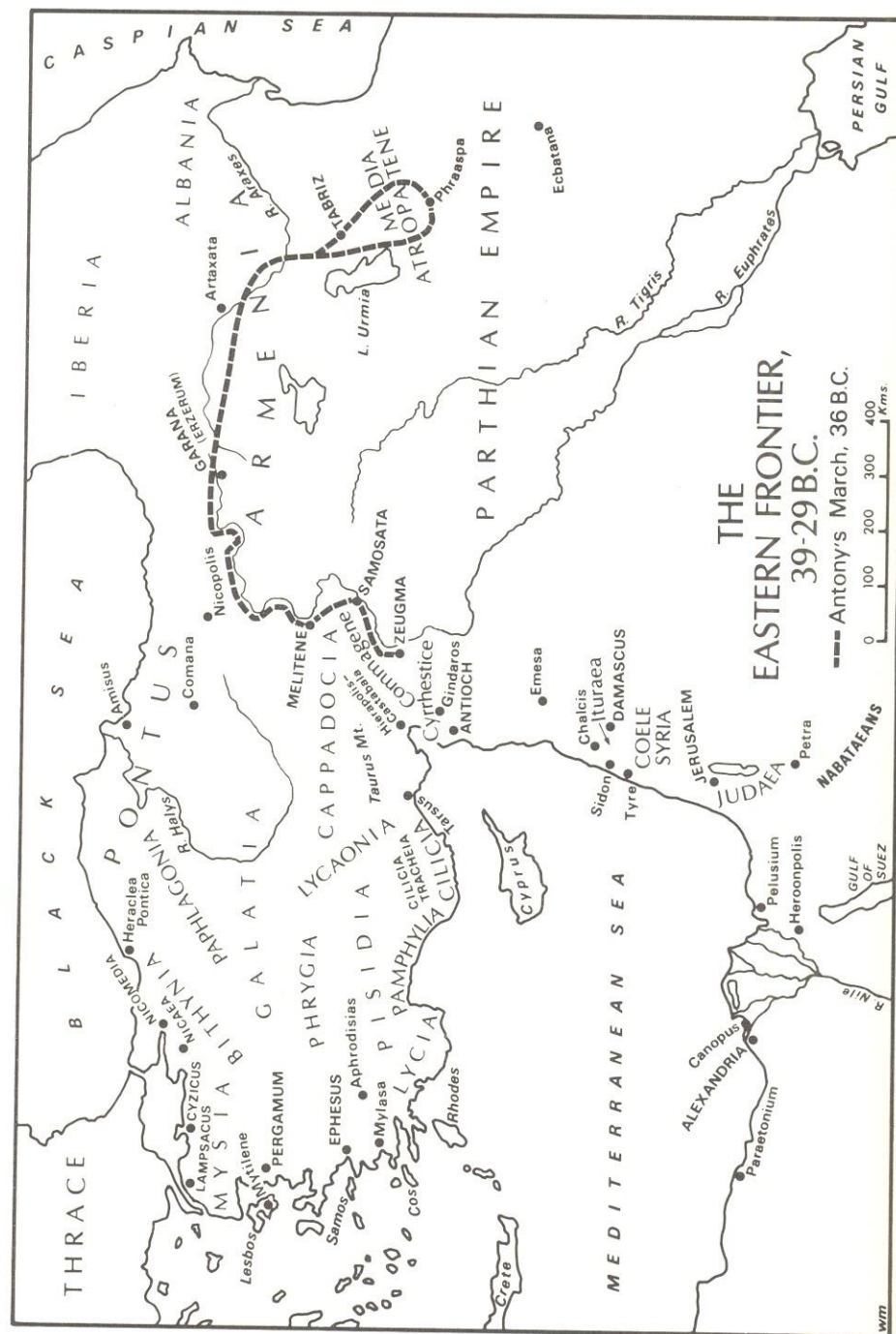
Source: Smallwood (1976) xvi.

Map 4 The Levant



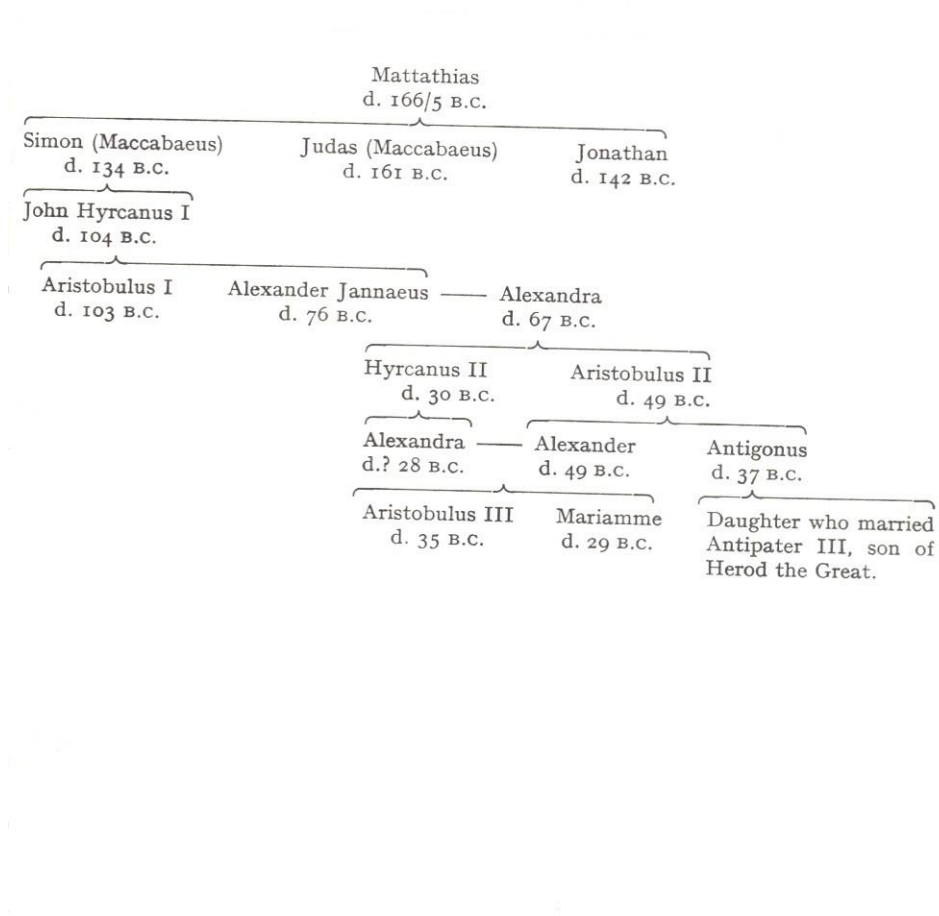
Source: Smallwood (1976) xv.

Map 5 Antony's march, 36 BC



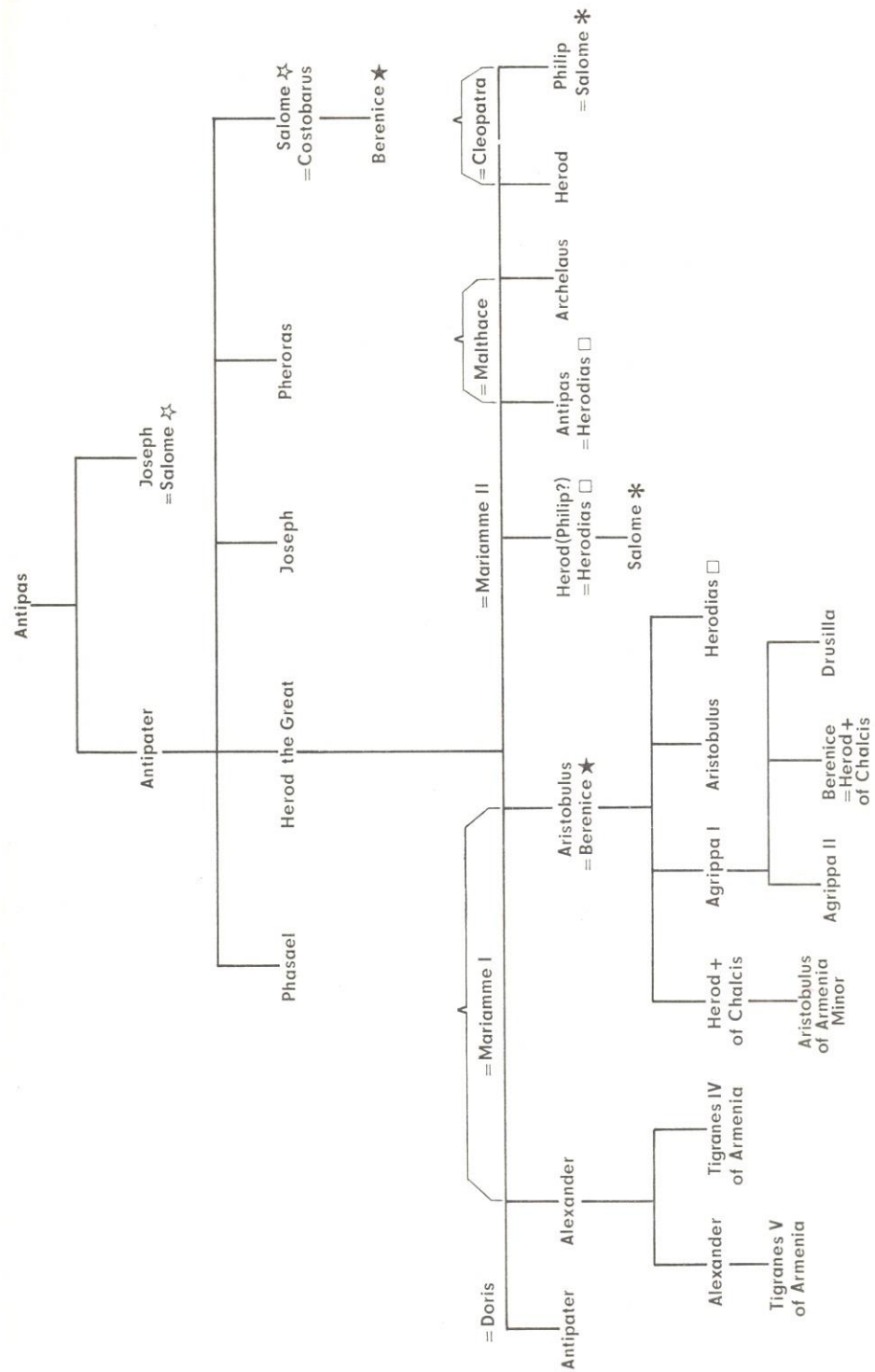
Source: Reinhold (1988) 242.

Stemma 1 The Hasmonaean Family



Source: Schürer (1973) 613.

The Herodian Family



Source: Smallwood (1976) xx.

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